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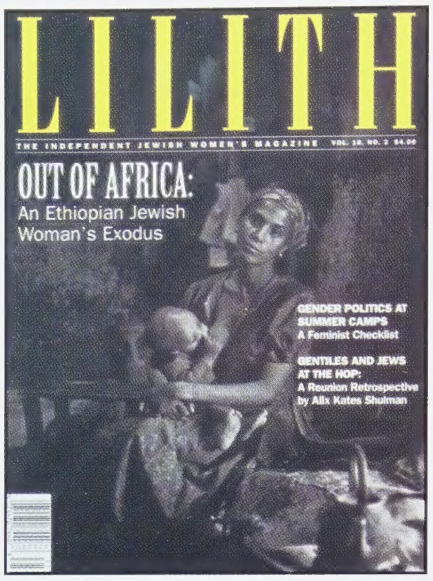

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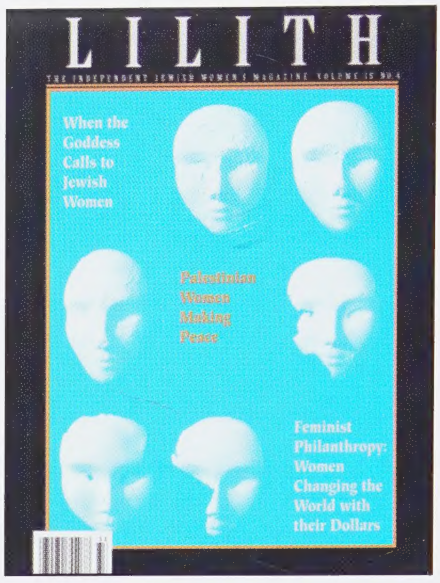
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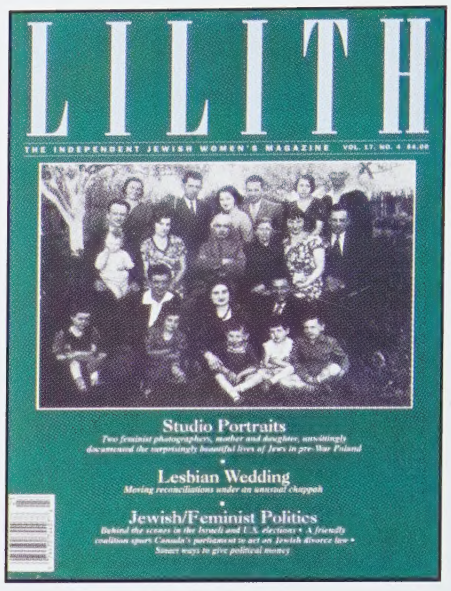

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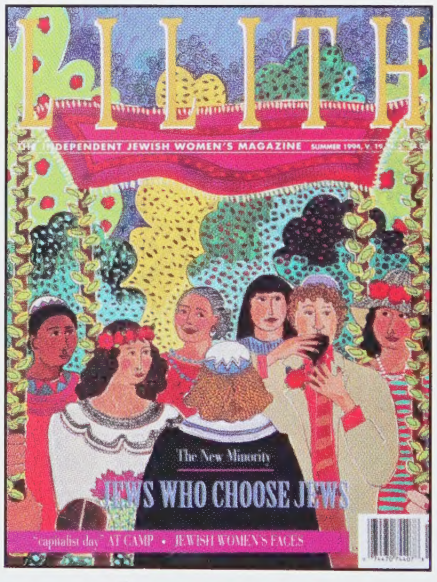

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FALL 1994
VOLUME 19, NO. 3

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by Susan Weidman Schneider

A look back over the changes of the last 18 years by LILITH's Editor-in-Chief and Co-Founder. Who was there in the beginning and what has changed with the times?

17 WOMEN TO WATCH DURING THE NEXT 18 YEARS

by Rebecca M. Wand

Meet some of the energetic, focused and effective Jewish feminists born just a few years before LILITH. They're changing the future: photographing in the Dead Sea, organizing nonagenarian women in a nursing home, lampooning their oppressors onstage. Hey! Can you believe how motivated and fearless they are?

22 GO AND LEARN

compiled by Sharon Musher

We'd never have found a listing like this 18 years ago! Jewish women are the best educated women in North America (by a long shot); here's where we can go to fill in the gaps—large and larger—in our *Jewish* education.

BOOMERS & BAT MITZVAH

Women who turned to LILITH for baby-naming ceremonies 12 years ago now flood our phone lines to brainstorm about the next *rite de passage*: bat and bar mitzvah. Readers request two kinds of help: concrete ideas and a fresh new way to think about the whole thing. Here, both "trees" and "forest."

24 BAT MITZVAH IN THE 90'S

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40 THE WAYS WE ARE

Jewish Judiths and Judys

by Judy Brodkey

An elite group, these J's and J's. No Susans or Robins need apply for membership, but the author generously offers to share her expertise in homonymic organizing (much more fun than it sounds).

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LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam: "After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, the Holy One created a woman, also from the earth, and called her Lilith. Lilith said: 'We are equal because we both come from the earth...'" (From The Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b)

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FROM THE EDITOR

Most magazines put readers in a passive relationship to the process and the product. This 18th anniversary issue of LILITH is different. It represents an unusually collaborative venture between readers and staff. A few examples:

•The special section on bat and bar mitzvah was informed and enriched by those of you who wrote and called to tell us about your own experiences with this rite of passage, responding to a call on this page in this spring issue.

•The notable women who tell us about their own syntheses of Judaism and feminism (p. 8) include many writers whose work has appeared in previous issues of LILITH, and who themselves are also our readers. The "young women to watch" (or the "young hags" as they were dubbed in the office) on page 17 came both from LILITH's subscription lists and from the address books of the wonderful crop of student interns working in the LILITH office this season.

•We use some new transliterations for Hebrew and Yiddish words in this issue, encouraged by longtime subscriber—and writer—Judith Romney Wegner, who wrote urging us to change to the system now becoming widely recognized as the standard for publications the world over.

•Although we recognize that the transliteration of the word "*chai*" in this issue isn't yet modernized, we've stuck to the more easily recognized form of the word for now. At the suggestion of subscriber Nicki Tanner of New York, we're asking women around the country—how about you?—to host a LILITH discussion group (a "chai tea"—get it?) in honor of the 18th anniversary. The LILITH office will help you figure out how to invite a group for good talk, spirited discussion and a chance to introduce the magazine to new audiences in honor of its 18th birthday. We'll send a 12-minute video, LILITH flyers and discussion ideas, and even put you in touch with other LILITH readers in your area.

I hope that you'll want to celebrate this banner year for LILITH by bringing the magazine to people who might not yet have seen it. Please take a minute now to give a gift subscription to LILITH to a local or college library, to a good friend or to someone you'd like to get to know better. Call the office at (212) 757-0818 or fax to (212) 757-5705 if you'd like extra gift subscription forms.

Honor special women in your life on the occasion of LILITH's significant birthday. Make a tax-deductible "birthday" contribution of $36 to LILITH for each woman you want to honor, and we'll publish their names—and yours—in the anniversary year issues of the magazine. *L'Chaim!*

Susan Weidman Schneider

We often suggest that a subscription to LILITH is a great gift for a bat mitzvah celebrant. After reading and editing the articles in this issue on the role mothers play in bat and bar mitzvah planning, LILITH's editors have a great idea. (We should have thought of this before!)

GIVE A GIFT OF LILITH TO THE MOTHER OF THE BAT/BAR MITZVAH! What a thoughtful way to let her know that you appreciate what she's going through too.

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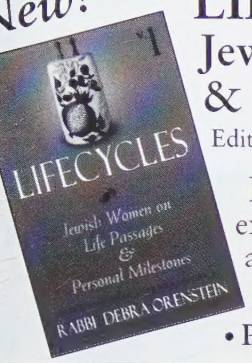

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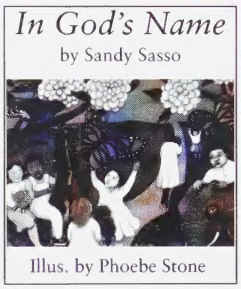

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JEWISH LIGHTS PUBLISHING PO Box 237L, Woodstock, VT 05091 *Credit Card Orders* 800-962-4544
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KOL ISHAH

"WOMAN'S VOICE." TRADITIONALLY, THE VOICE OF THE JEWISH WOMAN WA NOT TO BE HEARD IN PUBLIC, LEST IT AROUSE MEN. NO MORE. THESE PAG ARE MEANT FOR NEWS ABOUT JEWISH WOMEN, IN OUR OWN STRONG VOICES.

Kiev, 1994

From May 22 through 29, 1994, 300 Jewish women from all over the world met in Kiev to "reconnect for the first time," at an international conference of Jewish women. Approximately 200 came from small towns and provinces in Ukraine and Russia; including Siberia and Birobidzan. The women from the "West" were primarily from the U.S., plus representatives from Israel, England, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and Switzerland.

Sponsored by Project Kesher, a grassroots organization created by Illinois social worker Sallie Gratch to help buttress Jewish identity in the former Soviet Union, the conference fostered networks and established ties between women from the former Soviet Union (FSU) and Jewish women from the West.

The women of the FSU, who had never seen such a large gathering of Jews, let alone of Jewish women, reported feeling astonishment, expectation, and, uncomfortably for some of us, gratitude. Many Western participants traced their family to areas represented by delegates from the FSU; my own maternal grandparents came from Kiev and Dubno, in the Ukraine.

The conference bore witness to the Jewish reclamation that has already taken place in Russia. Two professional young Russian singers, dressed in tightfitting sequined gowns, performed a medley of Yiddish favorites, including the Sophie Tucker classic, "My Yiddishe Mama." The program was a hodgepodge—within the overblown conventions of old Yiddish theater. Yet that such a show could play in Kiev at all would have been inconceivable even a few years ago. Another emblematic moment came during *Shabbat* services, when Sophie, grandaughter of the Rabbi of Kiev (one of the first Jews killed at Babi Yar) sang the *Shema*, which she had just learned at the conference.

Jewish renewal in the former Soviet Union is not without contradictions. Anti-Semitism came up repeatedly in the *druzhba* (small friendship group) I attended. In the workshop I led, participants were asked to name one experience that made them proud to be Jewish. None of the women from the FSU could name such an incident. To the contrary, all told of discrimination, prejudice and threats. A distinguished professional woman in her early 60s related a 1991 incident, when all Jews in her town received letters saying, "Leave the city or you will be killed this evening." The letters oddly told recipients to put candles in their windows, so that their homes could be identified as Jewish. "We didn't know what to do, where to go," the woman revealed, trembling as she relived the incident. The next day, fearing retribution, she beseeched the *druzhba* participants never to repeat her name, or the name of the town.

PHOTO BY JOAN ROTH

Jessica Lieberman (far left) and her mother, Susan Lieberman Landau (far right), eat blintzes in Kiev at the home of their new friends Ina and Clara Petroshansky.

One *druzhba* focused on entrepr neurship; other *druzhbas* concentrated providing curriculum materials. Son Western participants hoped to link the communities with sister cities in the FS Project Kesher plans to pair region coordinators from the FSU with Weste coordinators to implement such ideas. Th "connections" have begun.

—Joyce Antl

My mother and I were or of 16 pairs of mothe and daughters in Kie The first evening, thos of us who arrived early two *Shabbat* candle anchored to Pepsi bottles; I kne this was going to be a differe kind of journey and a differe kind of Jewish conference. As w sang the blessings, I felt a yearnin for those who hadn't lived to se Judaism rekindled in this lan Everything in the room, from th frayed lace tablecloths to beets an stern waiters, called on me t believe that I was really here in t Ukraine, the former capital of ant Semitism, blessing *Shabbat*.

All the women who came to th conference were busy people use to long days teaching piano university level literature, writin manuscripts or law briefs, takin care of children and parents, and shoppin for vegetables. For all of us the conferenc was also a respite, an opportunity to sin beyond midnight with sisters and cousin from Israel and Byelorus, California an Johannesburg.

Beyond hand-me-down memories, wh the women from the former Soviet Unio knew about being Jewish was the stamp i their passports. We heard lectures o Zionism, intermarriage, *Shabbat*, Jewis women in the Bible. Pairs of Western an

women learned the Kaddish in order to
it together at Babi Yar. On *Shabbat*, our
day together, women who earlier in the
k had chosen Hebrew names for
nselves were called in small groups to
Torah, for an *aliyah*. At this grand
munal event we watched grandmothers
o had only known Jewish life in
ecution take on the responsibilities of
ish adults—to study, to teach others, to
the community.

My new friend Ina Petroshansky [see
o] has been lighting candles now for six
nths. In the last two months she has
un to say the appropriate prayer too. I
ouraged her to go to Israel in a way I
ld never persuade an American friend.
ne stays in her *shtetl*—as they still call
she probably will not marry a Jew. The economic opportunities are slim. Am I right to push her? In the meantime, she doesn't want to leave her family, so the books my mother and I brought to Kiev with challah recipes and rabbinic wisdom will help Ina put more Judaism in her own life, and into the homes of the children she teaches.

Tanya, 16, studies Hebrew at a Chabad school in Bratslov. She too came to the conference with her mother. She asked if women could be cantors. I said yes, pointed to the woman who'd just led our study session. "She's a rabbi!" Tanya looked puzzled, then a broad smile spread across her face. Here, with women struggling to connect with Judaism, is an opportunity to introduce a tradition of inclusiveness that in the West we are still struggling to create.

—Jessica Lieberman

Yoga and the Jews

At a time when many Jews are looking for spirituality outside of Judaism, a community in South Florida has begun a project to welcome spiritual seekers back into the fold. Living Waters is a Jewish spiritual health spa organized by Temple Adath Or of Davie, Florida. In a beautiful setting near the Atlantic ocean, Rabbis Shoni and Phillip Labowitz gather women and men from across the country, of all backgrounds and ages to "renew their souls."

Many participants have searched for spirituality outside of Judaism. Attorney Ricky Tannen says that "Living Waters acknowledges my spirituality in a Jewish context."

Combining guided meditation with liturgy, Shoni Labowitz integrates yoga with kabbalah, teaching that every chakra and yoga position have their corollaries on the kabbalistic Tree of Life.

Morning Yoga on the beach

"Rabbi Shoni," as she is called, was privately ordained by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi in 1987. She and her husband, "Rabbi Phillip," were both brought up in Orthodoxy, and even people who practice traditional Orthodox Judaism say they feel comfortable in the inclusive and non-judgmental atmosphere the Labowitzes provide.

In addition to Living Waters, Temple Adath Or has conducted a women's spirituality group for six years. Women of all ages and backgrounds from many parts of Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties gather twice a month for stories and rituals. Last year the group created a feminist Passover/Easter ceremony attended by over 200 women.

***Shabbat* services are held under the stars (weather permitting) at a Florida nature reserve. For more information contact: Rabbi Shoni Labowitz, Temple Adath Or/Living Waters, 11460 SW 16th St., Davie, FL 33325. (305) 472-6533. Fax: (305) 476-7466.**

—Deborah Fuller Hahn

Help Women Pray at the Wall

The International Committee for the Women of the Kotel (ICWK) has sued the Israeli government on behalf of women's right to pray at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. The government appointed a commission to "resolve" the matter. LILITH urges you to write a letter to the chair of this committee right now. A sample letter:

Dear Mr. Hollander,

As someone deeply committed to the right of Jewish women to pray collectively, aloud, with Torah and tallit *at the Western Wall, I turn to you. I hope that you see yourself as representing your Jewish sisters who wish to exercise this right in dignity and holiness, free from threats, violence or slander.*

Many new customs have been initiated at the Wall: bar mitzvahs, weddings, army ceremonies, memorials to Israel's fallen and to the victims of the Holocaust. Why not bat mitzvahs? Why not women praying together with our Torah?

Please mention accomplishments or institutional affiliations of your own, though you will be speaking for yourself, not for any organization. Letters should be sent to Shmuel Hollander, Esq., Chairman, Legal Adviser to the Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister, Jerusalem, Israel (FAX 02-610-618), with a copy to ICWK, 732A Carroll Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215.

—Phyllis Chesler

Succoth in a Feminist Voice

Fittingly enough, it was my experience of exile that goaded me into the most Jewishly creative endeavor of my life. After three and a half intoxicating years in Manhattan, it was hard to move home to Toronto. Exiled from the vivacious Jewish feminist community I had discovered in New York, I recognized for the first time that in Canada I was lonely. I'd always had to park either my Jewishness or my feminism at home.

(continued on next page)

Debbie Friedman's Bubbe Book

Debbie, the internationally known composer and singer, is editing an anthology about Jewish grandmothers (including her story about her own Bubbe).

Submit beautifully written memoirs about Jewish grandmothers to Debbie

c/o Henny Wenkart

THE JEWISH WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER
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There was no place, event, community, group or institution where could be both at the same time.

That's how in 1992 I came to propose, to the New Israel Fund Canada, a feminist Succoth celebration. I had the complicated aims creating a spiritual home for myself, galvanizing feminist activis and focusing our philanthropy toward feminist causes in Israel such rape crisis centers, battered women's shelters, grass-roots groups lik Ethiopian women's self-help and the Israel Women's Network.

We knew from the first that we wanted an all-women ceremon We booked a huge blue-and-white-striped tent beside Toronto waterfront for one evening during the middle days of Succoth, name our event "Succah-by-the-Water" and boldly invited women "Celebrate Succoth in a Feminist Voice." The succah buildin committee—under the direction of skilled carpenter Chari Cohen- ventured into the woods to choose dead pine trees for our corn poles. Chari drew up an ingenious plan by which a dozen women, a unskilled and inexperienced, could raise the 12-foot-high corner pos and top them with blue and gold painted beams.

The two succahs were poetically named: "Ingatherer," throug which women would enter the tent, and the main succah, "Season our Joy," to stand on the stage. All summer, a group of feminist artis worked mysteriously, led by Rochelle Rubinstein Kaplan, to crea huge four-by-eight-foot silk panels for the succah walls.

The first year, we sold our 350 tickets almost as soon as th program was announced. From outside the tent on the night of th ceremony, you could hear the warm voices of two women singin Hebrew songs of welcome. The succah glowed on the stage as wome crowded into the dusky tent perfumed with flowery decorations.

In my speech to greet our guests, I tried to explain that we wer doing nothing very radical. Far from disrespecting the traditions, w were trying to enact and make them our own, to end a long alienatio

Succah by the water

I hoped the reticent woul feel comfortable enough participate, "as if" it felt rea to give new feminist rituals chance to attain authentici in the observance.

All three of the wome rabbis in Canada were part the ceremony. Orthodo feminist scholar Norm Joseph gave an impassione welcome to our *ushpizin* great Jewish women of ou past who were our "guests. As she rolled off their name and deeds, the audienc shivered, not only with th autumn chill, but also with the thrill and astonishment of hearin about our great foremothers, some utterly unknown to us.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein likened the four species of the *lulav* to th four species of women: the palm, or spine, as the strong feminists; th willow, or mouth, as the women who speak up for the Jewis community; the myrtle, as the women who watch and wait and rei back the over-eager impetuous ones; the *etrog*, or heart, as the wome who feel deeply and cry out for justice. "In order for our femini

munity to be kosher," she said, "we to include and embrace all four."

sigh of agreement went up from our "congregation." Looking out from the *ah*, I saw Orthodox women, wary but ied with excitement, lesbian activists, skepticism melting, and women long anged from Judaism, their eyes ming.

Our cantorial soloists sang prayers to the thina, and we chanted a new responsive ng to honor our mothers. When it came for the waving of the *lulavim*, we divided small groups, named ourselves as the hters of our mothers and grandmothers, choked up with unexpected emotion as t of us held and waved the *lulav* for the time in our lives. After the ceremony, eli folk dancing went on and on, the ers leaping joyfully into the air, unwilling d the intoxication of the evening.

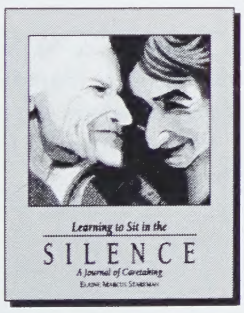
n our second year women came from ant cities to join us. For Succoth this , we're busy rewriting the ceremony to e it new, perhaps reaching out to invite stinian women to our Succoth Shalom.

We photographed our gorgeous, silken succah and made the pictures into notecards, which we're selling to raise money for feminist causes in Israel.

In Toronto's reserved and conservative Jewish community, where men hold all the highest institutional posts, there has been some ill-concealed envy of our feminist dynamism. Let's face it: even we were astonished by the hunger among Jewish women for just such a ceremony, just such a moment to exult in our own powers.

Succah-by-the-Water cards are $18 for a set of seven from New Israel Fund, 40 Dundas St. W, Box 29, Toronto, Canada M5G 2C2, or fax order with Visa number to (416) 340-0515.

—Michele Landsberg



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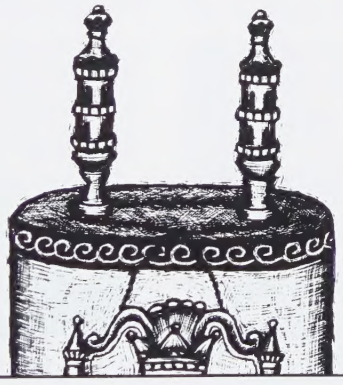

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18 YEARS

EUREKA

FRANCINE KLAGSBRUN, author of more than a dozen books, writes and lectures on social, religious and feminist issues.

I had already been involved in feminist writing—having edited *Free to Be You and Me*—when I began working on my first Jewish book, *Voices of Wisdom,* a compilation of traditional responses to everyday issues of life. I had always loved our sacred texts, but the more deeply I delved, the more sickeningly aware I became of the dearth of women's voices. In the midst of this conflicted enterprise I was invited to sit on the Commission for the Study of Women in the Rabbinate of the Jewish Theological Seminary to examine the question of ordaining women. As I listened to the testimonies of bright, dedicated women who wanted to enter the Conservative rabbinate (impossible in 1982), I knew that the only answer to the paucity of women's responses that had so pained me was for women to have full access to study and leadership. It was then that I became a passionate advocate of women in the rabbinate, and from there an advocate of all aspects of Jewish feminism.

SUSANNAH HESCHEL edited *On Being a Jewish Feminist* (Schocken). She teaches at Case Western Reserve University.

The sudden, unexpected death of my father, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, brought me the deepest pain I have ever experienced. I turned for consolation to the *halakhah* of mourning, described by Rav Soloveitchik so eloquently as a source of compassion and healing. Yet it turned out to be a horror of exclusion for me. My mother and I sat in the hallway as male mourners gathered to pray during the week of *shivah*; I was turned away, again and again, from synagogues in the U.S. and Israel when I went to say Kaddish; my father's grave is in a family plot that segregates men and women.

Susannah Heschel

Trying to understand the roots of sexism, I read Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father,* and realized for the first time that the problems were very deep. I was both elated—to find an explanation for what was happening to me—and despairing—to realize how difficult it would be to bring about change.

EM. BRONER is the author of Jewish feminist books, *A Weave of Women* and *The Telling* (HarperSanFrancisco).

My mentor was myself in that curious way in which you mother yourself, instruct yourself, and are the pioneer in your own life—and, it turns out—in the lives of others.

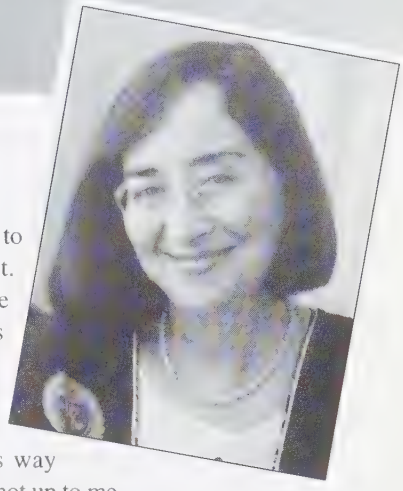
There were no Jewish feminist writers when I was working—or not readily available. But I learned from the concern and poetic language of Grace Paley and her material—mothers and children—about the validity of that subject matter and later, from Toni Morrison's experimental work, that one could go deep, deep within, into the unacceptable.

AVIVA CANTOR was a founding co-editor of LILITH. Her book, *Jewish Women, Jewish Men: the Legacy of Patriarchy in Jewish Life,* will be published by HarperSanFrancisco in 1995.

I became a feminist in 1970 when I was involved with the Jewish Liberation Project, a Socialist Zionist organization I co-founded that was part of the vibrant Jewish movement of the late '60's-early '70's. When the women in the movement began to apply feminist perspective to Jewish religious and communal life, we were surprised to encounter considerable ideological resistance among many male *haverim* (comrades).

One event emblematic of their response took place at a 1971 cultural conference sponsored by the movement's umbrella, the North American Jewish Students Network, and WUJS (World Union of Jewish Students), held at a camp in Zieglerville, PA. To mollify the men, who were angry that the women had caucused separately for three days to discuss our concerns, we decided to have a "coed" session. Expecting support, we were stunned when men from left to right hurled verbal brickbats at all of us, charging that feminism was "Bad for the Jews." It

To mark LILITH's 18th anniversary, we asked several notable women to tell us about their "Eureka moments"—texts and or experiences that shaped them as feminist Jews



Marcia Falk

was at this point that many of us correctly realized that feminism, which we considered ethical, logical, and good for the Jews, would meet with great resistance in the community. My attempt to understand the root causes of that resistance led me to analyze the specific character of Jewish patriarchy, its gender roles and gender psychology.

MARCIA FALK, poet and translator, most recently authored *With Teeth in the Earth*, a translation of the Yiddish poetry of Malka Heifetz Tussman (Wayne State U. Press). She is currently at work on *The Book of Blessings: A Re-Creation of Jewish Prayer* (HarperSanFrancisco), forthcoming in 1995.

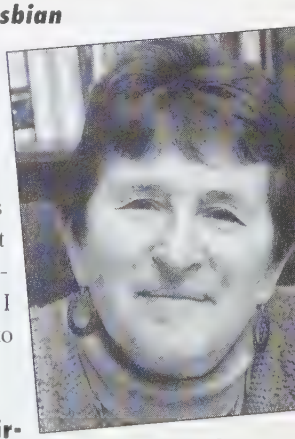
Translating *The Song of Songs* in the '70's had been a true labor of love for me, a pleasurable escape into the realms of sensuality, nature and eros. *The Song* was a rich offering of women's voices—immediate and authentic—not reported by a male narrator, not filtered through a patriarchal lens. In it I had discovered a model for myself as a lyric poet, while reclaiming my history as a woman and as a Jew. I wanted more. I decided to turn to the *Psalms*—the obvious source of lyric poetry in the Bible—and see what could be found there.

So I spent the summer of 1980 in an artists' colony in Virginia, trying to give new voice to the words of the ancient psalmists. But it was as though a huge boulder was thrust before my eyes whenever I caught a glimpse of what my rendition might be. That boulder was The Lord God King. There just seemed to be no way for him to take his place among the crowded company of trees and rivers and stones, all clapping their hands and rejoicing and clamoring for poetic attention. Whenever *he* entered the room, the music stopped.

That was a crucial turning point in my life, both as a creative artist and as a feminist Jew. I realized that I was no longer able to glide along, creatively stimulated and spiritually satisfied, on the stream of tradition as I had been led to it. I would have to throw my own pebbles into the flow, and wait and see what happened. If the stones made rippling waves and the water became choppy for a while, so be it. If the pebbles sunk to the bottom, to remain unseen forever, so be it. And if they fell in piles and the piles grew slowly into formations that ever-so-slowly shaped the contours of the river bed itself, so that eventually the flow took some new turns and wound its way into new terrains—that, too, was not up to me.

I accepted the sad reality that *The Song of Songs* is unique, and I stopped searching for ancient sources of Jewish women's voices to reclaim through translation. Instead I began adding newer voices to the ancient flow—including my own.

EVELYN TORTON BECK is the author and editor of *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology* (Beacon Press).



Evelyn Torton Beck

When I first taught courses on Yiddish language and translation at the university, I knew I wanted to focus on Jewish themes, but I was only beginning to understand myself as a *woman*. The syllabus was all male. I began by picking stories about women by male Yiddish writers, then I uncovered work in Yiddish by women as well. I began to see that my activist work would be to name and transform absences.

BARBARA LEVY KIPPER is chairman of the Chas. Levy Company, the 11th largest woman-owned company in the U. S. A recipient of American Jewish Congress' Deborah Award, she is also a trustee of the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies.

My involvement with women's issues was evolutionary—not one *Aha!* moment. I was a traditional wife and mother living in Israel when, in 1986, at 44, I inherited my family's business and became the first woman to head it in its 93-year history.

I'm passionately involved with my business; I see it as a place of opportunity for people of talent, women *and*

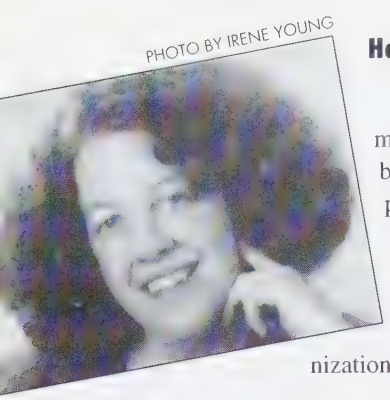


PHOTO BY IRENE YOUNG

Harriet Lerner

men. And in guiding the company I became keenly aware of the complex responsibilities and sometimes unenviable choices women must make. Now my Jewish sense of community impels my participation in a broad spectrum of organizations advocating for women.

HARRIET LERNER is staff psychologist at the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas, and author most recently of *The Dance of Deception* (HarperCollins).

I was born in Brooklyn in 1944, the younger daughter of progressive Jewish parents who were allergic to both religion and ritual. Our family sang Christmas carols and recognized no Jewish holidays.

Not surprisingly, I moved more naturally toward feminism than toward Judaism, although I was slow to "get" each. What heightened my consciousness was a move from Berkeley, California, to Topeka, in 1972. A feminist and a Jew, I became a scarce commodity in both categories.

The first time I recall feeling like a "Jewish feminist" (as opposed to a feminist who also happened to be Jewish) was at a workshop on ethnicity conducted by Irish-American family therapist Monica McGoldrick, who noted that Jews tend to enter therapy more readily than other ethnic groups and to stay longer, seeing it as a learning experience. On the spot, I forgave my mother for starting me in therapy at age two and sending me back whenever I came home from school with anything less than a B+. I found it liberating, normalizing and grounding to sit in this workshop and reflect upon my family's strengths and weirdness in the broader cultural context of Jewishness.

At that point I stopped insisting that my parents "didn't raise me Jewish," because the statement seemed false. My feminism, including my scholarly contributions, reflected my parents' Jewish values: the importance of working toward a fair world and the belief that my work counted.

ALICIA OSTRIKER is a poet and critic. Her forthcoming book is *The Nakedness of the Fathers* (Rutgers U. Press).

It was the Fall of '85 or '86. I began scribbling random jottings about the book of *Job*. I was musing on paper about how the Jewish God seems to like being challenged, and rewards the challenger. Then I came again to the end of the book where Job gets back his health, wealth, and 10 children. 10 children being replaced by 10 new ones! I fell off a psychic cliff. My focus shifted to Job's wife and I went into a virtual automatic writing trance (unlike anything I have experienced before or since). My pen figured that, unlike her husband she wouldn't be fooled: she knew very well that God didn't reward the good and punish the evil.

What would happen when Job's wife screwed up the courage to demand justice from God? What kind of reparations would be asked for? When I read what I had written, I realized that these had not been conscious thoughts at all, but were lodged deep in the unconscious—that is, in my soul. I have been thoroughly engaged in feminist biblical scholarship ever since.

BELLA ABZUG is a lawyer, former member of the United States Congress, Zionist since the age of 12, and presently the Co-Chair of the Women's Environment and Development Organization.

I was early influenced by my grandfather. He was my babysitter, and since he spent most of his time in the synagogue, so did I. I early learned how to *daven*. He would show me off to his friends and after I demonstrated my prowess, he would dispatch me to sit with the women behind the *mehitzah*. It has been suggested that it was those early days behind the *mehitzah* that had a great deal to do with my becoming interested in women's rights.

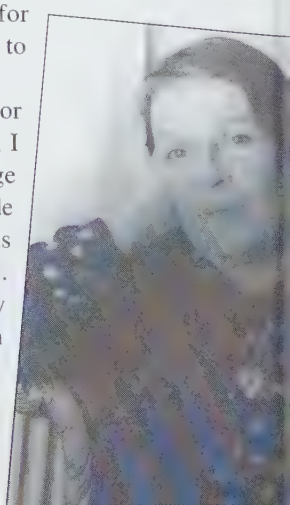
I studied at a Talmud Torah, at the Florence Marshall Hebrew High School and at the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, all of which played a major role in my development.

When I was quite young my father died. There were no sons, he had no brothers, so I went to our Orthodox synagogue to say Kaddish. Some of the men scowled, but I stood off by myself and no one stopped me. Very early I learned that one had a right, indeed an obligation, to try unconventional paths, and no one would or could stop us.

FAYE MOSKOWITZ, writer, edited recently *Her Face in the Mirror: Jewish Women on Mothers and Daughters* (Beacon Press).

I think that the Yom Kippur my budding breasts made me no longer welcome among my father and brothers in the main sanctuary at the Blaine Shul in Detroit was crucial for me. Suddenly I had no choice but to be banished to the balcony along with the other women. Matching rejection with rejection, I joined the Labor Zionist movement. This was 1946, when my Orthodox parents were still waiting for the Messiah to carry us on his wings to the Holy Land.

In Habonim, caught up in the fervor of belief in a prospective Jewish State, I adopted as my ideal the romantic image of the suntanned *chalutzah* working side by side with her male counterpart as together they reclaimed the desert. Though, ultimately, I didn't find my way to Israel, the lessons I learned in



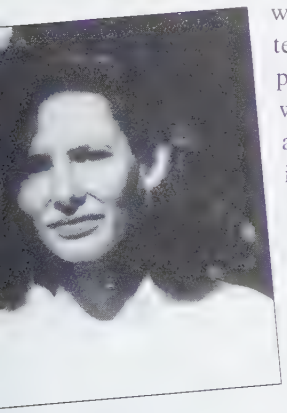
Faye Moskowitz

the movement became part of my life's fabric.

Habonim taught me that women could be equal partners in the political struggle for a Jewish state. The Biblical injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," became my credo, the inspiration for later political action and for the self-love that would not allow me to see myself or any other woman as less than any man.

VANESSA OCHS is the author of *Words on Fire: One Woman's Journey into the Sacred* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

In *Women and Jewish Law*, Rachel Biale emphasizes that we must familiarize ourselves with the sources of *halakhah* in sacred texts, regardless of our intention to practice and regardless of the fact that we, as women, can find those texts so alienating. I set off to become more intimate with those texts and to learn from the remarkable women who had long been wrestling creatively with them.



Before I embarked on this process of learning, Rabbi Susan Schnur reminded me that sacred learning, however highly regarded in institutional Judaism, is but one aspect of Jewish life. It certainly pays no heed to the ritual creativity of Jewish women. It's that aspect of Jewish life that engages me most these days: uncovering and giving honor to what Rabbi Laura Geller calls "the Torah of our lives," or what Schnur calls "Kitchen Torah."

ALEXANDRA LEBENTHAL is a Vice-President at Lebenthal & Co., the New York retail municipal bond firm. She serves on the UJA Board of Young Investment Advisors.

I was brought up in a mixed marriage. Although I did not identify as a Jew, I went to the inaugural conference of UJA's "Women of Distinction" during Operation Exodus because I was curious about Judaism, and the conference was presented as a glamorous event.

They showed a film about Anna, a Jewish violinist who lived in Moscow. The authorities wouldn't let her leave for several years. When they finally let her go, they forced her to leave behind her violin, her mother and her sister.

As the film ended, Anna walked into the room with her violin and played *Kol Nidre*. Everyone in the room was crying—a woman had made an unbelievable journey to be free, to follow her own religion.

The event was powerful. To hear Anna's story and music while sitting with some of this country's most successful Jewish women was awesome. It was almost as if I had been commanded to become actively Jewish.

CYNTHIA OZICK is a novelist, short story writer, essayist and poet. Her latest work is a play, *Blue Light*.

My grandmother Rachel was born in Hlusk, in Minsk Province, in 1861, the year the serfs were freed in Czarist Russia. In her childhood she learned Hebrew at a level well beyond the prayerbook. How did this come about in the life of a little girl of the *shtetl?* When the boys were convened to study, she listened behind the door, excluded and hidden. But she wanted to learn; therefore she *did* learn. In later years, before I was old enough to read, she translated for me—enchantingly—a Hebrew children's novel her son, my uncle, had written.

Jewish feminism is simply that: wanting to learn, and wanting (or seizing, or contriving) access to learning. Jewish feminism is an act of the intellect. It emerges out of a hunger for history, philosophy, logic, language, heritage. It is the desire for the Torah, and the passion for the meaning of Torah. The source of Jewish feminism is no more and no less than Jewishness itself (or call it the Jewish idea). Genuine Jewish feminism has no interest in woman's body; insofar as it centers on body, it departs from feminism and collaborates with anti-feminism.

At 25, I came upon "Romantic Religion," an essay by Leo Baeck: it galvanized my thinking and inspired me to read voluminously, independently, and over many years, in Jewish studies. It taught me the difference between Torah and so-called spiritualism. Today I am distressed by the prevalence, in the name of feminism, of women's "spiritual" groups; New Moon ceremonies honoring the menses; invented rites marking the menopause; and other allegedly "feminist" practices that fly free of textual studies.

PHOTO BY JULIUS OZICK

Cynthia Ozick

If it is not centered on text and study, it is neither Judaism, nor Jewish feminism. Study means a gradual and steady and patient and laborious accretion: it is the opposite of a sudden self-revelation or antinomian exaltation.

Jewish feminism signifies the achievement of the opportunity to study Torah. Anyone who defines it otherwise—as a celebration of the body, or as the corridor to pneumatic experience—is antifeminist, retrograde, and trivializing.

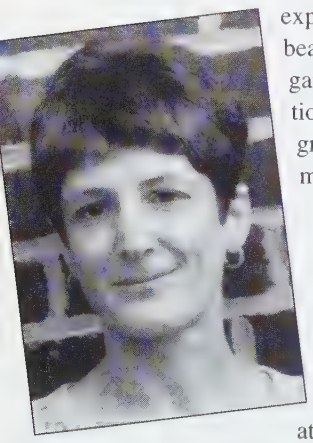
LYNNE LANDSBERG, rabbi, is the Associate Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism in Washington, D.C.

Ironically, the voices of Christian feminists I encountered at Harvard Divinity School made me realize I could bring my Jewish self and my feminist self together. They challenged me to realize that faith can be looked at in ways other than patriarchal if we really look

hard within Judaism. Hearing Christian feminists' stories and journeys and their deep sense of self helped me understand that my own Judaism and feminism could come together in a peaceful way. Only then was my decision to become a rabbi galvanized.

RIV-ELLEN PRELL, an anthropologist, is the author of *Prayer and Community: the Havurah in American Judaism* (Wayne State U. Press) and, forthcoming, *Fighting to Become Americans: Jewish Women and Men in Conflict in the Twentieth Century* (Basic Books).

The transforming moment of my life as a Jewish feminist came when I began wearing a *tallit* in 1974. I had found it difficult to make the transition from being able to argue for the importance of equality in Jewish practice to actually living it. I felt somehow unworthy. "When my Hebrew is better; when I know more," I told myself, "then I will be ready." At Chanukah, my friend Isa Aron made up my mind for me, she gave me one. I don't remember putting the *tallit* on for the first time; it wasn't a moment I ritualized. I simply became a Jew who prayed in a *tallit*, experiencing my entitlement to its sensuous beauty as part of my obligation to wear this garment. My public and unambiguous violation of normative Judaism was linked to my growing private life as a Jew. My *tallit* left me nowhere to hide.



Judith Plaskow

JUDITH PLASKOW is the author of *Standing Again at Sinai*, (HarperSanFrancisco). She is professor of religion at Manhattan College.

I attended a lecture by Naomi Weisstein at Yale in the winter of '70. She described her experience as a female graduate student at Harvard—identical to mine at Yale. One line stood out: "Women want to be ministers, lawyers and doctors. They end up as their wives." I had wanted to be a rabbi as a child. I was then a rabbi's wife. I was deeply troubled by that. But Weisstein's refrain was that we couldn't do it alone. That we needed a movement. I walked away a feminist, and began translating feminism into my work.

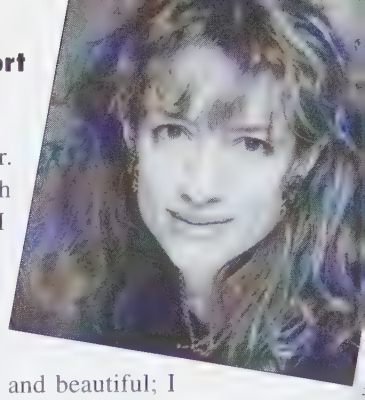
MARGE PIERCY is a poet and author. Her latest book is *The Longings of Women* (Fawcett).

I have been active in the women's movement since 1967. When did I begin to apply my zealous feminism to my Judaism?

One catalyst was the death of my mother. Although she had a son—my half brother who has died since—he had converted to Catholicism, so it was only I who could say Kaddish for her. I did so for a year.

So every day I was saying blah blah blah blah blah blah blah. I didn't understand a word of the Kaddish; this irritated me (only my brother had gotten a Jewish education). At the same time I found the cadences fascinating and beautiful; I began to feel that I had to know what I was saying, I had to learn.

Nessa Rapoport



I don't believe in cutting off any part of my awareness of the world, of history, of science, of political forces and interests. I want to examine and be fully critically conscious of my beliefs and my practices, including needing to integrate a direct mystical perspective. It was then that I began to find a Judaism I could function in actively, that I could come to with all of my identities.

NESSA RAPOPORT is the author of *A Woman's Book of Grieving*, and the novel *Preparing for Sabbath*. She is the co-editor of the anthology *Writing Our Way Home* and a founder of the Jewish Healing Center.

When I was 16, I published a *cri de coeur* in *The Canadian Jewish News:* Why could a man who barely knew Hebrew stand before his community and utter blessings over the Torah when I, as learned as the boys in my day school class, quite literally did not count? Why did boys need *tallit* and *tefillin* every day while girls, through some mysterious equation of biology and spirituality that would have been deemed pagan had it been applied to boys, were exempt from the means to prayer and God which our people had sanctioned for thousands of years?

More than 20 years after the dawn of Jewish feminism, I am astonished at what we've wrought. Of course, many inequities remain—legal and sociological—before we can dwell in the world we imagined in our teens. Still when Jewish feminists of our century depart this world, we can say with pride and wonderment: We made a difference.

PENINNAH SCHRAM is a storyteller and the author of *Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another*. She teaches speech and drama at Stern College for Women at Yeshiva University.

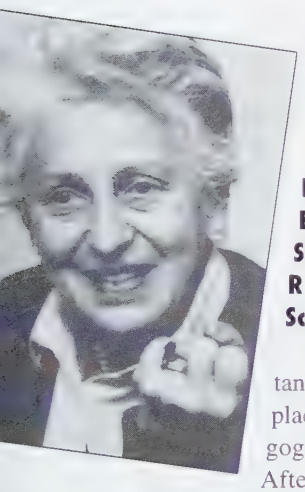
Reflecting on my journey as a Jewish woman, three pivotal "texts" come to mind. The first "text" was oral tradition—conflicting advice from my mother: A woman should give in more than 50%; a woman should listen and also question; a woman can accomplish anything she wants (just *"zai klug,"* as my mother used to say—be smart/wise—and *"hob sekhl"*—use common sense).

The second influence was a book a friend gave me in

graduate school whose thesis was that women cry more readily which releases their negative emotions, a catharsis that helps them live in a more creative, positive way—and longer. I had never liked that I cried so easily. Now I viewed my tears as a positive feminine force.

The third 'text' was a folktale, "The Innkeeper's Wise Daughter," that I first discovered when I was in my 30's. I loved the resourcefulness of the young woman in this story; her example—through wit, wisdom and perspective—of how life can be lived, on all levels, as a win-win situation; how if you're given a condition, you can meet it with a condition.

I define myself as a Jewish feminist because I believe in the right of choice, in the power of transformation from negative to positive, and in the necessity of mutual respect in relationships.



ALICE SHALVI is Chair of the Israel Women's Network, the leading advocate for women's rights in Israel, and Emeritus Professor of English at Hebrew University. She was also principal of Pelech Religious Experimental High School for Girls.

Although I have been a fairly militant egalitarian for most of my life, my place and role within an Orthodox synagogue was something I grew to accept. After all, one can praise God as loudly and wholeheartedly from one side of the *mehitzah* as from the other.

It was not until early adulthood that I began to feel a strong sense of exclusion—from the beautiful Sukkot procession with *lulav* and *etrog*, from communal dancing with the Torah scrolls on *Simchat Torah*. With growing envy I watched as boys read their bar mitzvah portions, as bridegrooms were fêted on *Shabbat*, as fathers made blessings on the births of their daughters. I was an outsider, a spectator. It was not in *my* flesh that the covenant had been sealed. But I felt helpless to change the situation.

In 1977, during my first visit to the U.S., I witnessed a bat mitzvah for the first time. This ceremony was virtually unknown in Israel. I was overwhelmed by the skills, the knowledge, the grace, the beautiful voices and the self-possession not only of the bat mitzvah girl herself, but also of her mother, grandmother and sisters, all of whom shared the Torah reading and even the leading of prayers that day. When I returned to Jerusalem and reported enthusiastically on what I had experienced, I was soundly rebuked.

Two years later, I found myself at the annual sisterhood service of a Conservative synagogue in Milwaukee. I was accorded the honor traditionally extended to visitors—an *aliyah*. Only women were present; no infringement of *halakhah* was involved. I accepted.

As I saw the silver pointer indicating the spot in the scroll which I was to kiss before uttering the blessing, tears filled my eyes. For first time in 53 years of my life as an observant Jew, I was seeing the inside of a Torah scroll at close quarters. With breaking voice, I added a second blessing—the *"shehechiyanu,"* the blessing we make on performing something for the first time.

For me that first *aliyah* was a distinct turning point, for it made me determined not only to increase my own knowledge and skills, but also to do everything in my power to educate and encourage my Israeli pupils to emulate their American peers and break through the barriers of ignorance and misconception that restrain and marginalize Orthodox women.

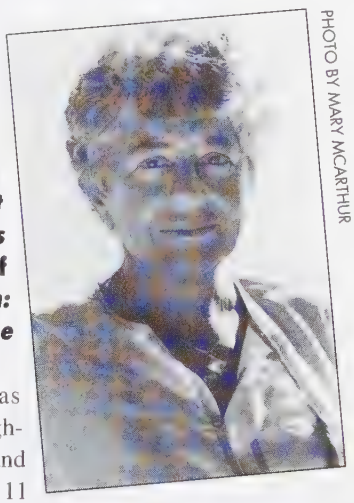


PHOTO BY MARY MCARTHUR

Savina Teubal

SAVINA J. TEUBAL is the author of *Sarah the Priestess: The First Matriarch of Genesis* (Swallow Press/U. of Ohio) and *Hagar the Egyptian: The Lost Traditions of the Matriarchs* (Harper & Row).

I am 68 years old and feel as though I have been guided throughout my life by the pillar of fire and the column of cloud. I was about 11 or 12 when I overheard my father inquiring from our Hebrew teacher how my two brothers and I were doing. The teacher began to praise an essay I had written on Abraham. Never mind the girl, my father interrupted, what about the boys? From that time on, *Genesis* remained a guiding force in my life.

The Shekhina is always with me, giving me a little nudge here and there when I wander into desert years. It is She who kept the vision of Sarah before me: At a seance after my divorce when I thought the apparition was my grandmother Sara; during my studies where I thought I had chosen the field of the ancient Near East but found myself writing *Sarah the Priestess*, and on my 60th birthday where She wove Herself into my *Simchat Hochmah*, the crone ritual I created for the occasion.

My insight into the lives of the biblical matriarchs continually returned me to my Jewish roots. My feminist Judaism includes women's seders, spiritual retreats, celebrations of *Shabbat* and *Rosh Chodesh*, and an intimate support group (called Mikveh Ladies) in my hot tub. □

Contributing to these profiles were Justyn Lezin, Robin Beth Schaer and Rebecca Wand.

LILITH LOO

Turning 18 is different for a magazine. For us humans, it means we can vote, we can toast ourselves (though only with grape juice) for having attained a degree of adulthood. For LILITH, 18 almost feels like a dowager's birthday. We need a way to calculate magazine years, like dog years.

In Hebrew, the letters that mark the number 18 spell out *chai*—the word for life, so 18 is an especially auspicious birthday. How did this magazine get started? Though the story of LILITH's birth and early years has probably been sanitized a little by the kindnesses of memory, let's begin.

Although several women were involved in creating the magazine, and the ground-floor discussions included women who got on as the elevator was ascending to the mezzanine (to stretch an image), my name has been at the top of the masthead since LILITH's first issue, dated Fall 1976.

In the early 1970's I was freelancing for a range of popular and literary periodicals, and had written some pieces from a feminist perspective. Then, in 1972, after six months in Israel with my husband and toddler son, I was invited to give talks to women's groups about how Israeli women's lives differed from our own, and to write about Jewish subjects. In the summer of 1973, Aviva Cantor, then an editor at *Hadassah* magazine, where some of my writing had appeared, asked me to meet her for lunch.

I knew that most Jewish women's magazines in existence then were virtually house organs for Jewish women's organizations, that almost every Jewish magazine was edited by a man, and that the emerging feminist press was either not interested in—or was hostile to—Jewish women's issues (these were considered the cranky concerns of the privileged). Over coffee, Aviva mentioned that a small group of women—journalists, editors, writers, about six or eight in all—had spoken about starting a new feminist magazine for Jewish women.

"What a great idea!" I hollered, imagining (wrongly) that this embryonic magazine was already well on its way. And the elevator carried me upward too.

In the years when Aviva and I worked together on LILITH, we often reminded one another of that first conversation. In downcast moments, when we bewept not so much our outcast state as our lack of adequate funding, or adequate sleep, we would always agree that, "If we were working at other jobs right now, and someone approached us to start a Jewish feminist magazine, we'd think it was the greatest idea in the world, and we'd quit our jobs to do it."

The magazine got named in one blink. Around a lunch table (food has continued to be central to our work) at the house of Judith Manelis (who left the LILITH collective before the magazine was launched to take on other jobs, including the directorship of Hadassah), Batya Bauman (now active in the animal rights movement and the proprietor of Feminist Voices, a speakers bureau) suggested, "Let's name the magazine LILITH." "OK," said someone else. And that was that.

The name has turned out to be a great consciousness raiser. Lilith, Adam's first companion, was her mate's full equal. When Adam got bossy and said, "I am your superior. I will lie on top of you. You will lie beneath me," and so on, Lilith fled the Garden of Eden. She refused to return, because Adam continued to insist that she be subservient. That's the core of the original story—which dates back about a millennium. Subsequently, Lilith got a very bad press. Later writers projected onto her all the evil a woman could embody. Paradoxically, she was both frigid and she

S BACK

SUSAN WEIDMAN SCHNEIDER

LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisited on equality with Adam: "After the Holy One cerated the first human being, Adam, the Holy One created a woman, also from the earth, and called her Lilith. Lilith said, 'We are equal because we both come from the earth...."'

(From The Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b)

seduced men who walked into dark houses alone at night. (You can still buy anti-Lilith amulets on the Lower East Side!) She was sterile, yet she gave birth to 100 demon children every day.

The legends of Lilith provide a window onto the paradoxical nature of the prejudices against all women, and of the stereotypes about women who speak out for their own equality. (Mind you, it does get a little wearing answering the question, "Wasn't Lilith a demon?" My husband, after having been asked innumerable times why the editors had named the magazine LILITH, finally started telling people, "It was either that or SHIRLEY.")

Sitting around the table at those first meetings were Elie Faust-Lévy, editor of the Women's American ORT Reporter; Ethel Fenig, a former teacher; Susan Dworkin, biographer and playwright. By Spring 1974, we were joined by Amy Stone, ex-reporter for the *Bangkok* (Thailand) *Post*, ex-Peace Corps volunteer. While our Jewish backgrounds ranged from Orthodox to assimilated, and our politics pretty much covered the map too, we all identified strongly as feminists and as Zionists. (That the latter word now sounds a little quaint is telling in itself.) A Jewish feminist magazine was the perfect amalgam of our Jewish identification, our feminist ideology and our professional skills.

We decided to list resources for Jewish women in each issue, and cover news that our readers would likely never learn about otherwise. We gave the sections of the magazine Hebrew names, both to mark ourselves clearly as a Jewish periodical and to do a little teaching on the side. Although various staffers over the years have toyed with the idea of calling the resources listings something other than Tsena-Rena (not wanting to turn away some readers), the Hebrew has stuck.

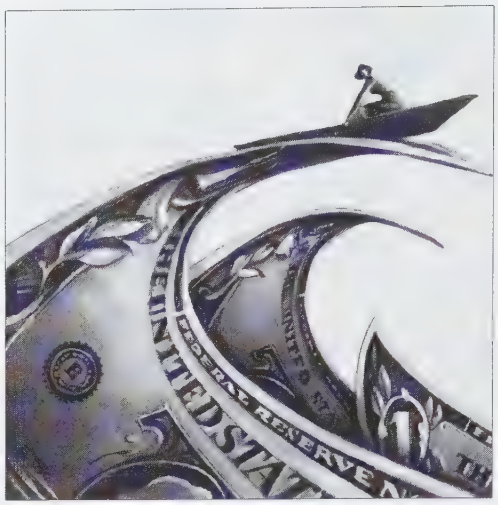
As with any fledgling project, LILITH had several hilariously naive moments before it got off the ground. Amy and I labored for days and nights in 1975 on a projected budget, having only a rough idea of what production costs might be by the time the magazine was a reality. We guessed how fast our circulation would grow, and carefully penciled these numbers onto green ledger paper someone had given us. We then photocopied the sheets (I still have the copies, with Amy's precise penwomanship) and sent them off to The Max and Anna Levinson Foundation, which had given LILITH its first seed money, $1200, in 1974.

A few weeks later the executive director of the foundation, who'd had lots of experience helping newly hatched projects steady themselves, called me. (We were planning, and later editing, out of various closets and crannies of my apartment). "Darling" (his very word), "I don't think you need our help at all. Your budget shows you expect a profit of $94,000 in the first year." Amy and I had obviously not understood that we were supposed to total all those projections, and that that's what "bottom line" meant! Fortunately, The Levinson Foundation funded us anyway; without their initial grants the magazine might never have appeared. LILITH has been sustained since by other foundations and individuals, with tax-deductible contributions both large and small, but all giving us the feeling that the magazine had really touched people's lives, and that they wanted to be a part of it. The Covenant Foundation, The Nathan Cummings Foundation and the Lilly Endowment, Inc., are among more recent grantors, and individual donors and board members—especially Barbara Dobkin and Yvette Gralla—have seen to it that our small staff has been able to project future growth with a little more sophistication and accuracy!

That premiere issue (now a collector's item) began with an unsigned editorial in which I said: "In history, literature, religious practice and personal relations, Jewish women have come to accept the concepts of ourselves that others have created for us. Most of the pieces...describe in one form or another what we must know about the influences that have shaped us, so that we can move forward and shape our own futures." We did that, creating support for such issues as ordaining women as Conservative rabbis and ensuring reproductive freedoms, battling the "J.A.P." stereotyping on campus and elsewhere, challenging abortion-rights foes and gaining recognition for the new political power Jewish women can wield with their philanthropy. We were guided and encouraged by remarkable writers, among them some of the women who talk to us in this anniversary issue.

The fidelity of our authors to their subject matter has been astounding, and sometimes overlooked. Blu Greenberg

is one stellar example. An Orthodox Jewish feminist, Blu wrote on women and Jewish law in LILITH's premier issue, saying, "My belief in the perfect God does not allow me to think that the Lord would favor one sex over the other in any area of life." She made the case for repairing the gross inequities in Jewish divorce law in the second issue, and in the 1990's is still teaching us how to value both tradition and change.



The hortatory tone of some articles in the first few years reflected, I think, the desire of LILITH's editors for justice, and justice NOW. We hoped that change would come by fiat, as soon as consciousness was raised high enough (like those Hasidim who believe that if only enough people would observe Shabbat the Messiah would come). We earnestly went about our work of raising consciousness, without much thought for how people feel when they're told what's wrong with their lives (and with the Jewish community). As the world has turned, and as the staff has turned too, we've come to respect the process by which change is made.

Two sorts of changes have been apparent to longtime readers of LILITH. Groundbreaking articles such as Aviva Cantor's "Vanguard or Rear Guard" articles of the 1980's, a scathing and accurate description of how Jewish women were "warehoused" in women-only organizations, paved the way for articles different both in tone and in substance. LILITH has become less doctrinaire, less convinced that there is only one right answer to every question. Eighteen years ago we asked, "How can a Jewish woman respect herself in tradition and culture which has often treated her like a second-class citizen?" Now we ask less about getting to be like men and more about how to value women's own experiences and methods.

Another difference is that we now recognize and applaud the trust we have in women's own voices. This is not so much a sea-change from the first issues of the magazine, but rather reflects the editors' growing confidence. The experiential part of almost every story is one of LILITH's unique attributes, particularly as other Jewish periodicals have begun to publish analytical articles on "women's issues in Jewish life." LILITH has always placed women as the subjects (not the objects) in the stories of our own lives.

LILITH was the first to publish women's Holocaust memoirs, women's accounts of abuse and incest in their Jewish families, college women talking about the conflicts they experience as Jews in a multicultural environment that doesn't value *their* specificity, and even the responses of a 12 year old to the ceremony her mother's friends created when she got her first period. We learn from each other's lives as well as from more formal texts.

What accounts for LILITH's durability in an era when such stalwart feminist periodicals as *Women: A Journal of Liberation* and Jewish magazines like *Present Tense* have folded? First, there's the *"farbrente meshugener* theory": that it takes at least one extremely tenacious person to launch and sustain an enterprise driven by ideology and not dollars. I suppose I'd audition for that role in the movie version of the magazine. Second, LILITH has grown to be more than a magazine. Other projects include the new Jewish Women's Talent Bank and Information Service, outreach to women on campus, and the dissemination of new curriculum ideas to correct sexist bias in Jewish education. The polarity between Judaism and feminism that seemed irreconcilable 18 years ago no longer pulls women apart with the same ferocious intensity as it once did, and perhaps LILITH can take some measure of pride in—and responsibility for—this integration. Third, true to LILITH's original mission to explore women's issues in Jewish life and to be a Jewish presence in the general women's movement, the editors have ensured that the topics LILITH covers get wide exposure; in the past 18 years LILITH has appeared in *The New York Times, Newsweek, Glamour, Seventeen* and the *Utne Reader*, and been talked about on "Donahue," "Oprah!" and "Good Morning America" (to drop only a few names...).

Yet there have been fragile moments, too. In our first decade there was never enough time, and never enough money, to come out as frequently as we wanted. But the hard times weren't all financial or temporal. There were a few angry times among the editors—not many, but enough to be lodged in memory—when some left and others stayed. Our staff now is made up of many different voices—usually all talking at once. Even the student interns, who have been with us in one body or another since the magazine's inception, have a voice at editorial meetings. The inclusiveness in the office, and in the pages of the magazine, doesn't happen out of ideology alone, but because it's much more fun this way.

So what's important to do now that LILITH is 18? Now that she can vote, what's she gonna vote for? Stay tuned for what we hope will be at least another 18 years making liturgies and celebrations more inclusive, launching women leaders into the highest positions in the Jewish community, encouraging our daughters and our sons to be feminist Jews. □

Women to Watch during the Next 18 Years

For this prospective look at the next generation of Jewish feminist movers and shakers, LILITH intern REBECCA WAND, a Harvard junior whose most recent project examined synagogue politics in small-town America, interviewed a cross section of highly effective Jewish women in their 20's and early 30's. Keep your eye on them.

On to Beijing

As a senior at Columbia University, Calanit Dovere wasn't sure what she wanted to do after graduation. She only understood that being another lawyer was out of the question.

"I couldn't stand the idea of doing something somebody else had done," she says. "Then I got the Israel bug. I went for a semester and really was searching for a way I could make myself happy and at the same time make a difference."

Now 23, and a graduate of the Columbia School of International Affairs, Dovere lives in Israel where she is developing *Mo'adon Nisan*, an 18-month leadership program that will give 28 Jewish, Druze and Arab high school girls such tools as public speaking, workplace skills, and background in current issues. The curriculum she is designing will culminate in a group trip to Beijing, China for the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

Calanit Dovere

"We're aiming to help these girls fulfill their potential in a way they define in order to become leaders in Israel," she says. "We would like to bring out in them new kinds of Israeli leadership."

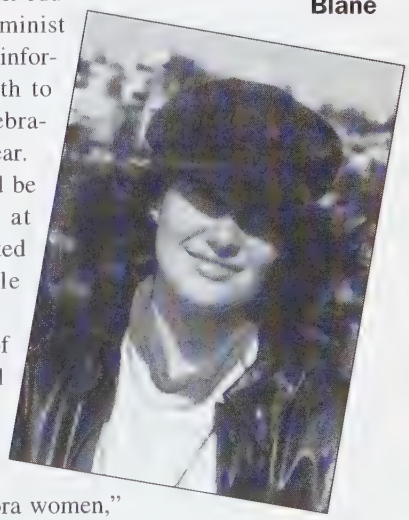
Two Worlds

Native New Yorker Julie Blane made *aliyah* in 1991 and developed *Kol Isha*, the first annual international conference for Jewish college women. She now coordinates educational programs for visitors to Israel at the World Union of Jewish Students, and co-teaches a course she developed for WUJS on Jewish women in history.

"Because I'm an Israeli from the United States, I feel like I'm straddling both worlds," she says. "One of the things I'd love to see is how each community can enrich the other. For instance, I often feel the Israeli feminist movement is anti-religious. The American model can offer a more pluralistic view of religious identity."

Blane helped develop *HERitage and HERstory*, a highly regarded new book which explores Jewish women's issues through campus and adult education programs, including feminist rituals for Jewish holidays, and information on each Hebrew month to help make Rosh Chodesh celebrations mare varied through the year.

Julie Blane

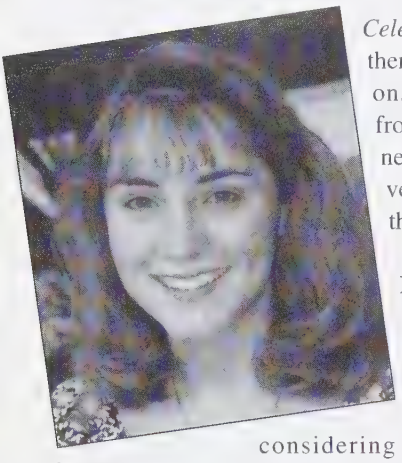


"I never actually thought I'd be paid for doing what I did at Brown," says Blane, who started a Rosh Chodesh group while an undergraduate.

Motivating large numbers of Jewish women outside of Israel is the next item on Julie Blane's "peace-process" agenda. "I'd like to create more of a Zionist feeling among Diaspora women," she proclaims. Currently, Blane is creating a resource center for The Jerusalem Link, a new group of women who are activists for peace in Israel.

Campus Networking

Lauren Eichler, 23, has developed a set of campus programs focusing on Jewish women. *A Celebration of Jewish Women: A Hillel Program Guide for the Campus Community* explores topics such as women leaders, the female body, spirituality and feminism, and, sexuality.



Lauren Eichler

"The reason I called my guide *A Celebration of Jewish Women* is that there's a lot of negativism that goes on," says Eichler, who graduated from Princeton in 1994. "There's a need to promote programs that are very positive. I specifically left out things like JAP- baiting."

Now the Bittker Fellow at the National Hillel Center in Washington, D.C., Eichler helps develop student leadership, networking and conferences on campuses nationwide. She is considering becoming a rabbi or a Hillel director herself, and says she would like to study female personalities in the Bible and sexuality in the Talmud.

Out of Bounds

Shana Sippy, 22, is completing, with co-author Rachel Dobkin, a handbook for college women to be published next spring by Workman Press. That's the feminist part. This fall, Sippy enters Harvard Divinity School for a Master's degree in comparative religion.

Sippy says she is fascinated by the boundaries created by such forces as religion, ethnicity, gender and class. Raised in Berkeley, California as a Jew by her Indian Hindu father and Jewish mother, Sippy says her interest in comparative religion likely stems from her own experiences. "My multiple heritage puts me on a border in the way I see things," she says. "I'm often both an insider and an outsider."

While at Barnard College, Sippy began a dialogue project linking campus women with older Jewish women in discussion and mentor relationships. She says through the project she discovered Jewish feminism's ability to reach out to feminists estranged from Judaism.

"The dialogue group brought in a lot of women who had not been identified Jewishly, but had been identified in feminist ways," she says. "It functioned as a women's support group, but also as a place of Jewish awakening."

Loolwa Khazzoom

Sephardi Students

Reaching out to Jews on the margins of the community is a concern shared by Loolwa Khazzoom, 25, who says her Sephardi Jewish heritage may be on the verge of extinction. Khazzoom says she feels marginalized in two ways—by the Ashkenazi community for her Middle Eastern background, and by the Sephardi community for her gender.

"I am always having to choose—do I want to go to an Ashkenazi synagogue where women can participate or do I want to go to a Mizrahi synagogue where I have to sit in the back?" says Khazzoom, whose heritage is Iraqi and whose Jewish upbringing was Orthodox.

As a child, Khazzoom left her Jewish Day school after a teacher told her it was against Jewish law to use a Sephardi prayerbook. When she felt similarly excluded as a Columbia University undergraduate, she began a campus organization for Jewish students from Arab countries.

Shan Sipp Rach Dobk

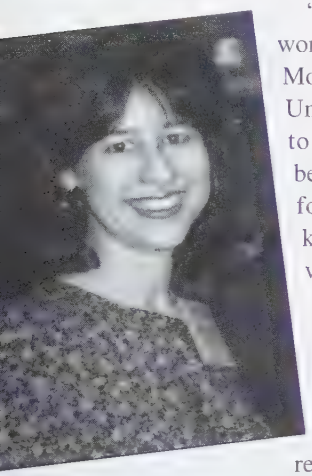
Khazzoom delayed a music career after graduation because she worried Sephardi tradition was not being transmitted. Without money, support, or mainstream interest in the cause, she founded in Los Angeles the Student Organization for Jews from Iran and Arab Countries, and plans to take the program to San Francisco this year. Also in Los Angeles, she created the One People Many Voices Coalition, a project which presents educational programs about Sephardi traditions at local synagogues.

One of the biggest problems Khazzoom faces is the attitude that Middle Eastern traditions have nothing to do with American Jewry. "Much of what [Ashkenazi Jews] learn is exoticized. They've been taught that gefilte fish is Jewish, they've been taught about the Holocaust. But you say 'Yemenites' and nobody recognizes that as Jewish—they think it's Arabic. They can't even begin to identify."

Khazzoom is compiling an anthology of writings by Middle Eastern women entitled *Arabic/Iranian, Jewish and Female: The Fusion of Sexism, Racism and Anti-Semitism in the Lives of Middle Eastern Jewish Women.*

Capitol Clout

Deborah Morgan, 25, Government Relations Coordinator for the Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council, has had a more institutional crucible for merging Judaism and feminism. A summer internship at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism launched her career in Jewish communal service.



"I was exposed to the way things work lobbying on Capitol Hill," says Morgan, who graduated from Indiana University in 1990. "I was exposed to issues I'd never thought about before. I came back to Bloomington for my senior year in college and knew that was what I had to do with my life."

Now Morgan represents the interests of the 20,000 Jews in Indiana lobbying at the State House for such issues as separation of church and state and reproductive rights.

"We've continuously got a fight on our hands here because it's a really Republican-controlled, anti-choice, conservative state," she says. "There's just something embodied in Jewish tradition that indicates that people should have choices, and we're commanded to do *tikkun olam* to make this world a better place. That means women having choices about the way they conduct their lives."

Morgan is on the board of the National Council of Jewish Women in Indianapolis and interned at the organization's Washington office while completing a double Masters in Jewish studies and policy sciences. "When I moved here, I joined as a volunteer and tried to do everything I could on my own time," she says.

Building Support

Deborah Rosenwald Levy, 30, left a career in French-American relations to found The New York Women's Building, a home for New York City women's organizations planned to open within the next year. Levy is executive director and founder of the project, which seeks to provide affordable, permanent office space for 15 to 20 groups and meeting rooms open to non-tenants.

"I left French, which I really enjoyed, but it wasn't in my heart," she says. "I am now so happy and fulfilled. Now I know why people have careers."

Levy began using her mother's maiden name as a middle name not only to honor her mother, but also to make herself "sound more grown-up." With support for The Women's Building from a board which includes Bella Abzug, Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, and authors Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Naomi Wolf, Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan, Levy no longer needs to worry about sounding too young.

Levy may have successfully resolved her feelings about her age, but not yet her uneasiness about organized religion. She says feminism has estranged her from much of religion. "It distances me because it does not value me as much as it does my brothers," she says. "Publications like LILITH—that's what keeps me involved with Judaism."

Fiction & Feminism

In the arts, Allegra Goodman examines the experiences of Jewish women through her writing. Goodman, now 27, had her fiction published in *Commentary* when she was a first-year student at Harvard. Since then, Harper & Row has brought out a collection of her short stories entitled *Total Immersion* (1989), and Goodman has contributed to *Out of the Garden: Women Writing on the Bible* (Random House, 1994). Her writing now appears regularly in *The New Yorker* ; for their recent fiction issue she was photographed by Richard Avedon in the company of such authors as Ann Beattie, Nicholson Baker, Thom Jones and John Updike.

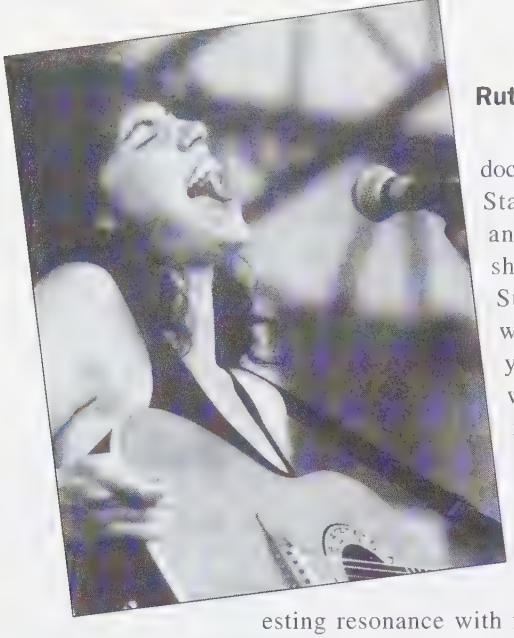
Deborah Rosenwald Levy

Goodman's stories include Jewish female characters of all ages. "I enjoy the challenge of getting inside people who are far from me in age and experience," she explains. The intergenerational issues she writes about are key, says Goodman, to understanding how communities function. "It's about the transmission of tradition from one time to another. It's about writing the history of families," she says. "I'm interested in the way Jewish communities have changed and people have changed." On the other hand she says, "A lot of my stories are about the ways different communities have stayed the same."

Goodman grew up in Hawaii, where her parents helped to found a Conservative synagogue and flew in their kosher meat from California. She grew up "among feminists"—her mother directed the women's studies program at the University of Hawaii.

Now living in northern California with her husband and two year-old son, Goodman is completing a

Allegra Goodman



Ruth Gerson

doctorate in English at Stanford University and a collection of short stories Farrar Straus and Giroux will publish next year. She is also working on two novels, one examining a community of Orthodox Jews in New York.

"I think it will have some interesting resonance with feminism because these people are so traditional," she says. But Goodman emphasizes her approach to feminist topics is never didactic. "When I look at feminist perspectives in my work I like to find the humor in them," Goodman asserts. "I think art has to be non-dogmatic."

SONGS WITH MEANING

Singer/songwriter Ruth Gerson, 23, has been giving Manhattan clubs a taste of her Jewish feminist ideas. Gerson sings about the Holocaust in her song "*Shoah*," and in "Evil Sex Queen" lampoons images of women in the media: "I've seen enough of the evil sex queen, midnight fright dream, helter-skelter beauty queen/With what pretty young thing and that hooker's scheme/Twisted baby sitter eats your wife and kids for dinner/Can't we find some other situation/ Some kinda, new kinda stimulation."

The singer graduated from Princeton where she studied Jewish existentialism, and rejected an acting career because she wanted to perform her own material. "It's about doing things that have meaning to you," she explains.

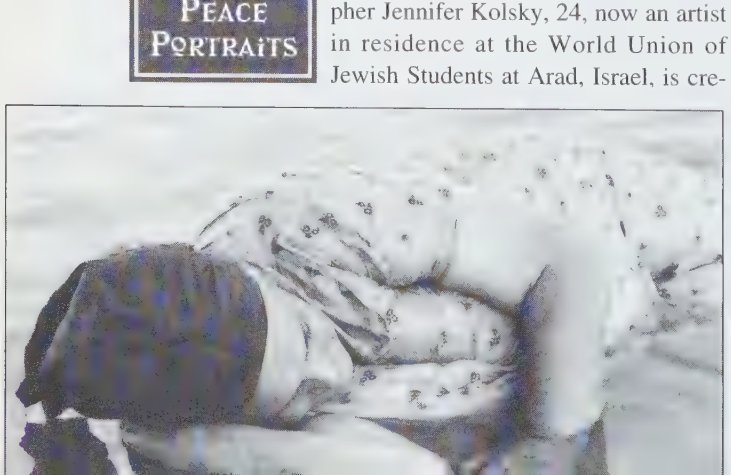
"What I have to say is distinctive," she says, but continues with generosity, "I'm of a generation that has benefited from the work done at another time. I use humor in a new way because of the work other people have done before me."

PEACE PORTRAITS

In the visual arts, California photographer Jennifer Kolsky, 24, now an artist in residence at the World Union of Jewish Students at Arad, Israel, is creating portraits of bathers in the Dead Sea. Through these pictures, Kolsky, whose photographs have been shown in the Israeli Knesset building and the Arad Museum in Israel, hopes to show a peaceful side of Israel she feels contrasts with negative images in the media.

In one portrait, a Russian woman is submerged wearing a headscarf and dress. "I was connected to that photo because of the physicality of her body, how comfortable she was, how it was okay that her body wasn't perfect," Kolsky recalls. "It was still a very beautiful moment. She's not a product of society's obsession with the body."

Kolsky says she hopes her future endeavors will further equality between the sexes. "I am using my camera to challenge society's assumptions," she says. Her past projects include portraits of her grandmother, who had Alzheimer's disease.

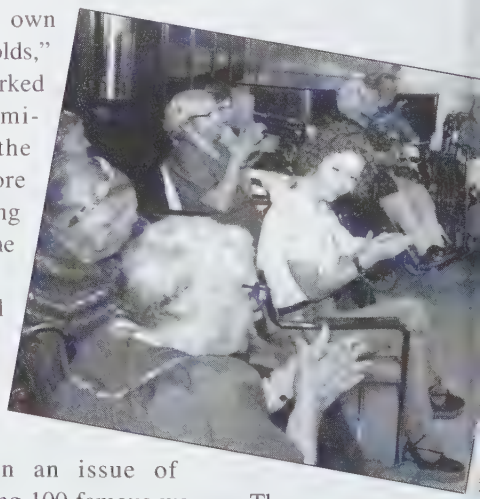


from the Dead Sea Series of photographs by Jennifer Kolsky

FEMINIST BUBBIES

Art therapist Diane Kaston, 30, believes she has discovered an important—and neglected—feminist resource in an unlikely place, The Jewish Home and Hospital for Aged, in New York City. In addition to a visual history project where residents decorate their own enlarged photographed portraits, Kaston facilitates Lilith's Cave, a weekly discussion group for 25 to 30 women.

"I never thought I'd find models for my own feminism in 90 year olds," she says. "They worked and raised families and survived the Depression all before people started talking about careers and the Mommy Track."



Dian Kast in Lilit Cav

Last Memorial Day, Kaston couldn't find a Jewish newspaper to bring in for discussion, and instead brought in an issue of *Mirabella* highlighting 100 famous women. The magazine generated unexpected enthusiasm.

"These were 90-year-old ladies nobody thought to ask. All of a sudden you put them in a room and give them an opportunity and they're all radical," she says. "They're sick of male doctors, and they're sick of being oppressed."

The women discuss such issues as *halachic* menstrual "impurity," and have written letters supporting women's right to pray at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, responding to an Israeli court decision rejecting women's pleas for equality.

Now reading Esther Broner's *The Telling*, a book about a feminist Passover seder, the group hopes to have an egalitarian seder next spring. The women are deciding which parts of

the liturgy to keep and which to change; the four sons will become, next spring, the four children.

Kaston believes the discussion group empowers its participants. "These women are a lost resource," says Kaston. "I realized I had a millennium of *kneidlach* (matzo balls) soup; I had a thousand years of women who had cooked and learned, and not one of them had ever stood at the head of the table and led the seder."

New Rituals

Non-sexist ritual possibilities excite Yael Ridberg, 25, a third-year student at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia. Ridberg creates rituals focusing on women's lifecycles and experiences to integrate her love of Judaism and her feminist convictions.

Ridberg recently created "The Swinging Pendulum: A Ritual for the Sandwich Generation" for her mother, who was caring for both her aged mother and her children. The ritual involves discussion with a group of close friends, a set of meditations, and immersion in a *mikveh*.

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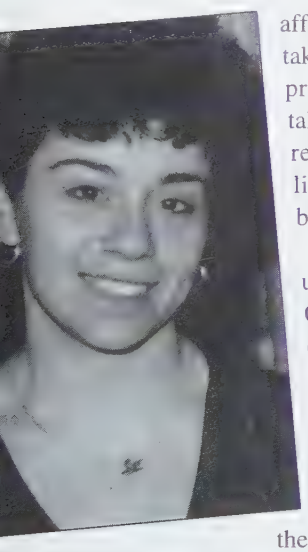


"The idea was for the daughter to affirm her own life separate from caretaker, to recognize the intensity of the process she's been going through in taking care of her mother, and also to recognize the other blessings in her life: her family, her work, her hobbies," Ridberg says.

Ridberg calls her own Jewish upbringing "eclectic"—raised in a Conservative synagogue, she lived on an Israeli kibbutz after high school, and later attended a semester of Haifa University, where she worked at the women's center *Isha l'Isha* and was active in Women in Black, a women's group protesting the Occupation.

An editor of the Jewish Women's Studies Project newsletter at her rabbinical school, Ridberg hopes to be a pulpit rabbi for at least part of her career. "I'd like to be serving a Reconstructionist congregation and really reach out to Jews who somehow have felt on the margins of the Jewish community, whether they be female, gay, lesbian, or intermarried," she says. "It seems to me that in order to make a difference in the Jewish community you have to be willing to extend yourself and reach out to the fringes to bring people in."

For Mitzvah Day, an annual day of community service for the Reconstructionist community, Ridberg wrote a blessing which captures the spirit—and the work ethic—of so many of the young women who are defining Jewish feminism through social action, religion, politics and art:

"Blessed are You Adonai, *Creator of the universe, who has brought us closer to Your work and has called upon us to transform the world in holiness."* □

שרשרת
sharsheret

Linking Young Jewish Feminists

***Sharsheret** (Hebrew for chain or link) is a grassroots Jewish feminist organization of women in their 20's and 30's. Created in the fall of 1993 after a group of young Jewish women met at a Jewish feminist conference, Sharsheret meets twice a month, for Rosh Chodesh and for general discussion. The group plans to provide a mechanism whereby women can start their own groups linked together in a national network.*

Sharsheret members discuss what they were looking for when the group was formed:

ELLEN STEIGMAN: We were all looking for the same thing—community—a need that wasn't being met. SHELLY SOCOL: I returned from a year in Israel to begin making a life in New York City. The first thing on my agenda was to find a community of young Jewish feminists. After speaking with many women, we realized that there was an urgent need to formulate a mechanism to bring us together. We wanted a place where we could listen to one another's voices and a space in which to verbalize to others what young Jewish feminists were feeling and thinking today. ROBIN BETH SCHAER: I searched every progressive Jewish conference and organization for my peers. At one "Emerging Leaders" workshop the panelists spent the entire time defending their needs to the older women. At another twentysomething workshop the men monopolized the conversation, repeating over and over that being Jewish must be our first priority. I wanted to stand up and yell, "You may think of yourself as a Jew only, but many of us also belong to other communities. We are female, lesbian, gay, bisexual, Sephardi and of color. If having other priorities prevents us from taking a leadership role or being in your club then the Jewish community will never be whole." JUSTYN LEZIN: Just because something is Jewish and female doesn't mean it will hold a great deal of appeal, or address my concerns. We can create structures that address very specifically our goals, ideas and feelings, not in opposition to others but specifically for us. Some things we take for granted that our mothers fought for, and some things we are demanding our mothers never dreamed of achieving. ERIKA MARCUS: There is something hopeful in young progressive women coming together and saying both Judaism and feminism are important. We will see a change in the face of the Jewish community. We will be the next leaders—and there are a lot of us.

To get involved contact: *Sharsheret*, PO Box 2276, Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009.

—Robin Beth Schaer

RESOURCE L

JEWISH WOMEN'S

Whether your looking for a bet-midrash (house of study) led by reknown feminist scholars, a degree granting academic program or a mystical retreat, the opportunities abound for international women's study. Don't just make resolutions this year, go out and learn!

NATIONAL:

Aleph: Alliance for Jewish Renewal
7318 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19119. (215) 242-4074.

A resource center that connects people with hip "renewal" communities and classes nationwide.

Hadassah
Director of Education, Carole Diament, Ph.D. 50 West 58th St., New York, NY 10019. (212) 355-7900.

This women's Zionist organization offers a large range of classes to members across the country on Talmud, Hebrew, music, Judaism, ecology and Jewish women writers. Contact the national office or your local chapter to learn more.

CALIFORNIA:

Chochmat Halev
Avram Davis, 1743 Oregon, Berkeley, CA 94703. (510) 644-2956.

A co-ed, egalitarian yeshiva with a *bet midrash* (house of study) where Jews can learn traditional texts and other topics including Jewish women's spirituality.

Women's Institute for Continuing Jewish Education:
4126 Executive Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037. (619) 442-2666.

Offers classes on Jewish women's roles in Talmud, Torah, art, history, sociology, archeology and other disciplines. Men and women of all denominations and backgrounds are invited to attend, although most students are female.

COLORADO:

Jewish Women's Resource Center
Barbara Lehman. (303)758-8232. Fax(303)758-8232.

A non-denominational center in Denver that offers classes year round and holds a feminist seder. Holiday retreats for women are also available.

NEW YORK:

Drisha Institute for Jewish Education
Devra Lehman or David Silber, 131 West 86th St., New York, NY 10024. (212) 595-0307.

Enables women who can read and understand basic Hebrew texts to pursue full-time or part-time study that is parallel to the serious study adult men can do in yeshiva. Drisha also offers community lectures for both men and women.

Elat Chayyim: the Woodstock Center for Healing and Renewal
Jeff Roth or Joanna Katz, P.O. Box 127, Woodstock, NY 12498. (800) 398-2630.

A summer and High Holy Day retreat center dedicated to making Judaism "non-sexist" and "non-hierarchical." Offers small workshops on topics including Jewish feminist theology. Participants do not need any skills, although Hebrew may be helpful for some classes.

Jewish Renaissance Center
Esther Gotlieb, 120 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10024. (212) 580-9666.

Offers classes for women on Jewish history, law and texts during intensive week-long and summer programs, and during year-long morning, lunch time and evening programs. Tries to bring secular Jews closer to Judaism without making people "feel guilty."

Ma'yan: the Jewish Women's Project
Eve Landau, 180 West 80th St., New York, NY 10024. (212) 580-0099.

A program of The JCC on the Upper West Side of Manhattan that offers Rosh Chodesh celebrations and study sessions led by Jewish feminist scholars.

Sisterhood of the Queens Jewish Center
66-05 108th St., Forest Hills, NY 11375. (718) 459-8432.

Although many sisterhoods offer classes, the Queens Jewish Center is known for Smadar Rosensweig's popular class about female personalities in the Tanach.

The Workmen's Circle
The Culture and Education Department., 45 East 33rd St., New York, NY 10016. (212) 889-6800 or (800) 531-1553 (in the summer).

A summer retreat program in Hopewell, NY, that offers seminars in Yiddish language, literature and music. Children's programs available.

YIVO
Dr. Allen Nadler, 1048 5th Ave., New York, NY 10028. (212) 535-6700

Co-sponsors a joint Yiddish Language program with Columbia University as well as small seminars on Eastern European Jewish history and culture. Its faculty includes several female scholars including Deborah Dash-Moore and Jenna Weissman-Joselit. Spring and Fall classes are available in addition to a Yiddish summer program.

MASSACHUSETTS:

National Yiddish Book Center
Pearl-Anne Margalit, 48 Woodbridge St., South Hadley, MA 01075. (413) 535-1303.

Offers a week long summer retreat and a weekend conference in the winter that focuses on Yiddish culture and language for students of all levels who are members of the book center. Past topics include women in Yiddish literature.

IMAGES ON THESE PAGES FROM DRISHA, ALEPH, PARDES AND GIVAT HAVIVA

T FOR EDUCATION

PENNSYLVANIA:

Jewish Renewal Life Center
Rabbi Julie Greenberg, Room B202, 6445 Greene St., Philadelphia, PA 19119. (215) 843-4345. Fax (215) 247-9703

A residential year of training in Jewish spirituality and community building. Classes include: "Feminist Perspective on Judaism" and "Sources of Authority in Judaism: Adding Women's Voices to the Talmud."

INTERNATIONAL:

ISRAEL:

Givat Haviva Education Foundation
Hal Cohen, Executive Director, 224 West 35th St. , Suite 403, New York, NY 10001. (212) 868-0353.

A Jewish-Arab center for peace that tailors lectures for groups travelling in Israel. Possible subjects include Jewish feminism, Arab-Jewish relations and the status of Arab and Jewish women.

Jewish Theological Seminary
Office of the Registrar, Ginger Greenspan, 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027. (212) 678-8007.

A graduate program in Israel that grants an MA in Judaic Studies with a Concentration in Women's and Gender Studies. Courses include "Sexuality and the Family in the Ancient Near East" and the "Female Voice in Jewish Literature, Prayer, Letters and Autobiographies."

MaTaN Women's Institute of Torah Study
c/o Iris Ben-Yishai, 75 Seckle Pear Rd., Levittown, PA 19056. (215) 949-3952. Fax (215) 943-1916.

Long and short term programs for women who want to take a traditional yet probing approach to both classical and modern texts. Faculty includes Malke Bina, Aviva Gottlieb-Zornberg and Beverly Gribetz. Fellowships are available.

Neve Yirushalayim College
Lise Panish, Sara Norflus, 25 Broadway, Suite 403, New York, NY 10004. (212) 422-1110.

An Orthodox women's yeshiva offering full time Jewish studies at six to seven different levels. Students learn chumash, halacha, history, Hebrew and philosophy. The six week introductory course is offered throughout the year.

Ohr Rivka, division for women of Ohr Torah Institutions
Yishai Perlin, 155 E 55th St., Suite 303, New York, NY 10022. (212) 935-8672.

An umbrella organization that oversees a number of programs in Israel including:

Midreshet Lindenbaum: An intensive Jewish studies program for women who have basic to extensive Hebrew and Jewish backgrounds. Offers traditional courses in Tanach, Mishna, Women in Jewish Law and Women in Tanach. Halachic observance is assumed.

Bruria Scholars Program: Offers fellowships for the study of traditional Jewish texts to female students who have considerable textual background.

Pardes Institute
Susan Gotlieb, PO box 926 , Avon, CT 06001. (203) 675-1431.

A co-ed, politically and religiously unaffiliated yeshiva that teaches people from diverse religious backgrounds. Students analyze and challenge texts in an atmosphere where respect for inquiry is combined with spiritual vitality. One year and summer programs available.

WUJS: Kol Ishah Summer Seminar for the Advancement of Jewish Women's Leadership
3535 Bathurst St., Toronto, Ontario M67 207. (416)783-1165, Fax (416) 783-1166.

A month-long seminar in Israel that trains university women from all over the world to become Jewish leaders.

Yakar Women's Studies
Rechov Halamed Hey 10, Jerusalem. (02) 612310 or 617460.

New-Age influenced Orthodox women's *Bet Midrash* that offers *chavruta* (small group) study with two to three women under the guidance of outstanding women scholars.

CANADA:

Centre for Women's Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Frieda Forman, 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario M5S1V6. (416) 923-6641 ext. 2244.

Conducts a bi-annual conference that examines Jewish women's history, from biblical characters to contemporary issues including Jewish lesbians and women on kibbutzim. The conference, entitled "Jewish Women's Voices Past and Present," is scheduled for March 24-26, 1995.

ENGLAND:

Oxford Centre for Post-Graduate Hebrew Studies
Yarnton Manor, Yarnton, Oxford 0X51PY. (0865) 842195 (direct) or (0865) 377946. Fax AX (0865) 375079.

Offers a one-year masters program for college graduates with degrees in the humanities. The Centre takes an interdisciplinary approach to Jewish history, culture and relations with other traditions. In addition, it offers intensive summer programs in Yiddish.

-compiled by Sharon Musher

Bat Mitzvah IN THE 90's

BY VIVIENNE KRAMER

Since 1922, when Judith Kaplan [Eisenstein] became the world's first bat mitzvah, much has changed. Then, the bat mitzvah was a chance to claim that girls were "as good as"—the "same." Now it is an exhilarating opportunity to improvise, to search for the richest, most authentic marriage of tradition and change. For those who want to get maximal meaning and *naches* out of this rite of passage, here is a spot check on some innovative ideas.

Gloria Rubin, a rabbinical student from Oakland, New Jersey, wanted her daughter Rebecca's bat mitzvah to incorporate all the aspects of Judaism meaningful to her family: Torah, prayer, *tzedakah* (charity), community, and Jewish music. Rebecca's ceremony took place on Rosh Chodesh, the beginning of a new Hebrew month, traditionally a festival for women. The Rubins invited women and men to don *t'fillin* and *tallit* for an egalitarian morning service where Rebecca led the prayers, chanted Torah, and discussed the significance of the new moon. She was "twinned" with an Ethiopian girl, and asked guests to bring specific school supplies for her twin's classroom in Israel.

"Bat Mitzvah is a time to focus on a child's virtues, to reinforce for the child a strong sense of her most real self, of her fundamental worth."

—Rabbi Susan Schnur—

Rebecca's invitations solicited personal information from guests which her mother collated into a booklet of lighthearted sketches. This facilitated introductions at the luncheon during which a *badchan* (a traditional *shtetl* jester) led dancing and entertained with mime, stories and juggling.

The Kauvars of Denver chose Tu B'Shvat, the New Year of the Trees, as the time for their daughter to celebrate her own growing and blossoming. "There are so many wonderful Jewish themes relating to festivals—Succoth, Chanukah, Purim," Joanne Kauvar comments, "Why do families opt for ones like Disney?" The Botanical Gardens proved an ideal location for their daughter's event.

At her Tu B'Shvat bat mitzvah, Eloise Kauvar led her guests through blessings, explained 15 traditional fruits and grains, and connected Tu B'Shvat to ecologically endangered environments. Guests celebrated at Tu B'Shvat "stations" while musicians played. Jewish National Fund boxes and literature on rain forests afforded guests an opportunity to give *tzedakah*, and each child received a sapling to plant at home.

Prior to the Tu B'Shvat "seder," Joanne had arranged a "women's circle," where adult female friends and family gathered to share their wisdom and to offer symbolic gifts. "Adolescent girls don't have much opportunity for direct sharing with adult women," notes Joanne. "For Eloise to be the focus of attention was intense."

Elizabeth Wolf of Raleigh, North Carolina also seeks to create shared experiences between mothers and daughters through her *tallit*-making workshops. "So much of the bat/bar mitzvah experience," she explains, "is taken away from parents, that a shared *tallit* project becomes a precious moment." Initially begun as a practical endeavor, the project gradually becomes a spiritual one—a shared occasion when mother and daughter complete a demanding task and create a singularly designed artifact that uniquely reflects one girl at one period in her life.

Julie Ochs of Morristown, New Jersey, chose to celebrate her bat mitzvah at a modern Orthodox synagogue, a decision her Conservative-leaning parents, Vanessa and Peter Ochs, respected. Julie led a Sunday morning *shacharit*

service and delivered a *d'var torah* on *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers), which she and her father had studied each *Shabbat* for the previous two years. Vanessa created a personal blessing for Julie as an emerging adult and presented Julie with three special gifts: her great-grandfather's

"Many are proud to be without religion whose children cannot afford to be without it."

—Erik Erikson—

Shulchan Aruch (Code of Laws) from his grade school in Eastern Europe, her grandparents' *Tanakh* (Bible) in English, and her grandmother's recipe for gefilte fish.

For many Jewish families the occasion of a bat mitzvah raises the question of "where do we fit in?" Some join a synagogue; others struggle with the imperfections of congregations with non-egalitarian practices.

Sara Gilbert wanted a bat mitzvah ceremony for her daughter Molly that would provide the sense of community she felt within her Orthodox synagogue in Denver, yet one which would enable Molly to chant Torah and *haftorah*—roles not permitted to women in Orthodox services led by men. "It was important for me to provide a model of taking on a personal religious challenge and breaking new ground as a woman," says Sara. With the guidance of the Women's Tefilla (prayer) Network, Sara and Molly lobbied for a *halakhically* acceptable service led by women in which certain prayers requiring a quorum are omitted, and the men sit behind a *mekhitza* instead of the women. The synagogue acquiesced. Thanks to the perseverance of the Gilberts, a monthly women's service is now a tradition at their synagogue.

For families without strong religious practices, bat and bar mitzvah can become the moment at which families truly define their personal dedication to Jewish life.

Betsy Dolgin Katz, curriculum consultant to Chicago's Community Foundation for Jewish Education, calls the bat mitzvah "a teachable moment" for the family, a potentially powerful anchor for Jewish adolescents at a turbulent time. Katz urges parents to frame the occasion as a beginning, "moving children from the fun, child-oriented aspects of Judaism to the more lasting, challenging richness of Jewish study which emphasizes personal growth within a Jewish community."

Some educators believe the rite of passage needs to involve a community service project for which the child takes responsibility, triggering both personal growth and the acquisition of new skills.

Danny Siegel, writer and director of the Ziv Tzedakah Fund, pairs children with mitzvah projects around the world. His foundation provides lists of practical long-term mitzvah projects. Siegel suggests, for example, donating a percentage of bat mitzvah gift money to a charity the girl selects.

Regardless of the family's choices, the bat mitzvah is a formal ritual that marks the frequently awkward transition from child to adult. Many parents recognize this critical period in their daughters' development by choosing female rabbis and cantors who act as teachers, mentors and positive Jewish role models. Finding a knowledgeable female tutor may facilitate a recognition and exploration of gender issues as part of the bat mitzvah curriculum.

Rochel Trugman of Denver tutors girls in their birth *parshot* (the Torah portion read on the week of one's birth

BUBBE ON THE BIMAH

At my daughter's bat mitzvah, my 70-year-old mother was called to the Torah for the first time. After her *aliyah*, when people were shaking her hand and saying *yasher koach* ("may you go from strength to strength"), my mother said, "I always do this for other people, and now they're doing it for me."

For me, it was giving something to my mother which she would otherwise not have received in this lifetime, and in a broader sense, righting an injustice.

My parents, uncles and aunts are moderately observant Conservative Jews who grew up Orthodox. At my daughter's bat mitzvah the services were led by a 60-ish woman (the president of the synagogue), and the Torah reader was a woman. Although I hadn't planned it this way, this turned out to provide my extended family an alternative Jewish experience, something they had never been offered before. And they really liked it.

--Michelle Clark

GRANDPA ON TAPE

The only thing we knew about my father's childhood was that he was born in Russia in 1910. My dad never discussed the past. Apparently, it was much too painful.

My daughter Dayna's bat mitzvah provided me with the leverage I needed to get my dad to talk about his childhood. The funny thing about my father as a grandfather is that he will often do things for his grandchildren that he never would have done for his children.

The summer before Dayna's *simkha* I began talking to my father about the fact that he was the last surviving member of the family from the Old Country. I thought that it was important for him to share his history with Dayna while there was still time. I emphasized that this was the best possible present he could give his granddaughter.

My father is a stubborn man. I sent him several autobiographies (notably, my entire collection of George Burns books), a list of several questions for him to respond to, and some blank tapes. Essentially, I took away all of his objections ("I don't know what to say," "I don't have anything to record on," etc.). The questions were as non-threatening as I could make them, involving things like what games he had played, what songs he sang, and where he went to school. I also, however, asked things like what incidents of anti-Semitism he had encountered, and what it was like growing up during a war.

Grandpa's tape—which meant a great deal to Dayna—showed up in her speech only once, when she referred to the "great-grandmother who worked hard to keep the family going when my great-grandfather came to America." Not much, you think? You should have seen the look on my father's face at this mention of his mother. That one reference transcended the generations as nothing else could have and provided me with one of those rare life moments when I knew I had done exactly the right thing to please a parent.

—Lois Gross

according to the Jewish calendar). Trugman espouses the Kabbalistic belief that at the moment of birth one's astrological constellation (*"mazal"*) is on the rise. Each birth *parsha*, therefore, contains a clue to the challenges an individual might face in her life. Her students also study the meanings of their own Hebrew names, and the stories of female biblical role models to whom they are encouraged to look, later in life, when they need inspiration.

Rabbi Judith Beiner believes the onset of puberty and the issues it raises about self-esteem, sexuality and relationships should share some place in a curriculum. "If I had to advocate the development of any ritual for bat mitzvah I would celebrate the onset of menses. It is rarely discussed in Western society, and yet it is probably the biggest issue in a young girl's life."

"To the extent that the bat mitzvah is about family, it is holy....We meet God in the faces of our parents and our children... for in them we behold our own birth and death."

—Rabbi Harold Kushner—

Judith and Joe Rosenstein of New Brunswick, New Jersey chose Rosh Chodesh for their daughter Dalia's bat mitzvah, a time that suggests the natural merging of the religious and the personal. Dalia, a serious dancer, wished both to read from the Torah and to dance to musical accompaniment. She studied prayers and psalms dealing with praises to God and the new moon, and then choreographed five selections with help from a dance teacher. Dalia says she is proud that "As a feminist in a Jewish community I was able to read from the Torah and dance, which I love. Dancing out the words I had to really feel them, and that gave me a stronger sense of my Jewish identity." Observed Judy Petsonk, a guest, afterward, "You could see, in the adolescent girl dancing, the woman she was about to become." □

Vivienne Kramer lives in Denver, Colorado. Her daughter's recent bat mitzvah celebration included a "women's circle."

SIMKHA AT A SPECIAL SITE

Camp Massad, a Hebrew-speaking camp on the Gimli highway 45 miles north of Winnipeg, is known, not for its water skiing, swimming pool or indoor plumbing (all lacking here), but simply for its spirit. This *ruach* led Massad to initiate its first-ever rite of passage ceremony, on June 26, 1993, when Ryla Shawn Braemer was called to the Torah as a bat mitzvah.

That Ryla became a bat mitzvah at Camp Massad was no accident. The camp was the place where her mother and father met and fell in love and where Ryla herself had spent the past two summers. At the time of Ryla's bat mitzvah, her mother, Leah, had just organized Massad's first-ever camper reunion. From the start, former Massadniks were involved in the bat mitzvah preparations. Invitations were hand-painted by a family friend who had honed her artistic talents as a counselor at Massad, where elaborate backdrops and stage sets are a customary part of the summer's dramatic productions. The bat mitzvah choir was comprised of former Massad staff who had all at one time or another sung in the Shabbat choir at camp. And the Saturday morning bat mitzvah service was led by a family friend and *khazan*, the camp program director.

In casual dress, 200 of the Braemer family's friends and relatives, nearly 100 of them children under age 12, made the early morning drive out to the camp. Warmed by hot coffee, they sat on newsprint covered, graffiti-scarred benches. The *khazan* led the congregation in the basic *Shabbat* morning service accompanied by the boisterous, playful harmonizing of the choir. Parents, aunts, and uncles proudly recited Torah portions which they had studied for weeks. Ryla, draped in a *tallit* by her two grandmothers, offered up two Torah readings before tackling her *maftir* and *haftorah*. The Torah had been borrowed from her Hebrew day school. The makeshift *bimah* had been constructed the day before by her father and uncle.

Ryla's parents addressed Ryla, saying they wished above all for her to be blessed with the kind of friends who were celebrating with them that day.

Under umbrellas and makeshift head coverings adult guests were ushered through the rain to the *chadar ochel*, the camp dining hall, while the children were taken under the wing of camp counselors. The dining hall was decorated much as it is on any given camp *Shabbat*, with fresh cut flowers and handmade decorations. The delicious kiddush luncheon was prepared by none other than the camp cook.

Here was a bat mitzvah celebration that unfolded on a site where love of Judaism and Israel is instilled in hundreds of campers each summer.

—Sharon Chisvin

For post bar/bat mitzvah youth, Liz Cutler has created a Jewish Outward Bound experience known as "Mosh West." Cutler saw no ceremonies celebrating rites of passage in American life other than "getting drunk, getting laid, and getting one's driver's license." Inspired by ancient puberty rites which combine tests of spiritual and physical endurance with opportunities to realize responsibility and commitment to community, Cutler designed a wilderness experience for youngsters entering 10th grade (or older) which removes them from their "comfort zone." They undergo a physically, mentally and emotionally challenging 35-day course that integrates Judaic programming and prayer, and provides opportunities to talk about sexuality with a rabbi and counselors. Ritualized coming-of-age ceremonies include a 24-hour isolation period in the wilderness, adopting a "spirit name" symbolic of newfound strengths, and a *"mikveh"* ceremony in the Colorado River.

—V. K.

WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE: Mosh West, Tamar Erlich, OFRUI, 600 Lach Labelle Drive, Oconomowoc, WI, 53066, (312) 782-1477, Ext. 13.

Details from a tallit designed and handsewn by Debra Danis Seiden for her niece Sophie Danis Oberfield on the occasion of her bat mitzvah. The appliquéed design of walls of the Old City and the hills of Jerusalem were made from the fabrics of the dresses worn at family weddings by Sophie's aunts, mother, and grandmother.

IN ONE FAMILY, THE INTERGENERATIONAL SAGA OF

The Bat Mitzvah Dress

by NECHAMA LISS-LEVINSON

I was at home when my mother bought my bat mitzvah dress. It was from Alexanders, a discount department store, whose bargains often seduced my mother into believing that she had filled her needs or ours. I remember the dress exactly. It was long-sleeved, and fell in a perfectly straight line. There was no waist, and practically no bust, offering me little help as my body struggled to develop those features. It had vertical stripes, a white sailor collar, and a ribbon down the front.

I hated it. Even as I write those words, I'm not sure if that's exactly accurate. Rather, the dress, with its classic look and severe lines, just wasn't me. I tried not to think about it. My mother had picked it out. Obviously she thought it was appropriate. My job was to wear it and to be grateful, and not to make a big deal of it by creating a scene.

Rivka and Nechama Liss-Levinson

What was really a big deal was that two girl cousins my age, Robin and Jill, were coming up from Florida, flying all the way to New York on my account. One of our first agenda items was to show each other our dresses. Robin unpacked her suitcase and proudly hung up the dress she had brought for my bat mitzvah. It was a twin of my dress. Only her stripes were pink and white.

I hid my anguish in a frenzy of denial. I knew I wanted a different dress. I didn't want to wear the same one Robin was wearing. But the words stayed stuck in a very tight place deep inside.

Thirty years later, we began to prepare for my older daughter Bluma's bat mitzvah. I took the day off from work. We would spend the day together, looking for a dress for her bat mitzvah. Clearly, the memories of my own dress propelled me.

Our initial efforts were unsatisfying. The first few stores didn't have anything that Bluma really liked. We decided to take a break, and went off to lunch together. I took her to a fancy restaurant with peach tablecloths, small vases of spring flowers, and frosted candlelight. Even though we hadn't found a dress, Bluma was in heaven. "You know," she said, "this is great. Usually, you're in such a rush, you want me to find something right away. This time, I feel like I can go to as many stores as I want to."

I reflected on her words, once again, admiring her perspicacity. For the millionth time, I regretted my ever-present rushing around, trying to get so much done in so little time—the unrelenting fallout of being a woman of the '90's. I agreed with her observation. I actually did feel that, for this dress, we could take as much time as she liked. We would go to as many stores as needed. And I didn't feel rushed at all.

At lunch, it was Bluma's idea that we take a break from looking for her dress, and try looking for one for me. I was touched by her thoughtfulness, and together we entered a small boutique. Usually, in a specialty shop, I feel awkward. I experience an anxious urgency to please the shop owner by buying something. I become gawky and adolescent all over again.

But this time it was different. I felt as though I swept into the store with grandeur, rather than slinking in as though I didn't belong. With a sense of joyful accomplishment I announced to the owner, "I need a dress for my

daughter's bat mitzvah." As I spoke, I proudly put my arm around Bluma, the one whose Jewish coming of age was to be celebrated. I couldn't believe I was the one saying the words "my daughter's bat mitzvah." My eyes filled with tears.

Although we had been preparing for the bat mitzvah in myriad ways, there was something tangible in making this announcement to this store owner, who didn't know me. Yes, I had arrived at this point in my life. My thoughts sped through the time zones of my mind. I remembered my own bat mitzvah. But I also moved forward, imagining myself returning in a dozen years or so, announcing, "Yes, today I need a dress for my daughter's wedding."

The dress I bought for myself for Bluma's bat mitzvah seemed perfect. It was both elegant and jazzy. I was able to express a part of me that I often kept hidden, something to do with sophistication and luxury.

Mme. Sylvia, the couturier, inquired about Bluma's dress, and sent us off to a store which specialized in "occasion" dresses for teen-aged girls. When we entered the store, it seemed as though we had entered the scene of the Sugarplum Fairy. The walls were hung with layers of white and black, festooned by rainbows of pastel colors.

Bluma tried on just about everything in the store. She chose a dress that was silver, black and white, with pizzazz and flounce. She looked radiant. I felt deep satisfaction that she was so happy with her dress, with her body, with her very self.

Three years later, for our daughter Rivka's bat mitzvah, it was time again to look for new dresses. Rivka had been anticipating the day with relish. One of the difficulties of being the second child is having to wait so long and so often. The benefit is that parents have often learned something during all that time. We immediately went to the teen dress boutique, and Rivka chose a beautiful dress in black, with strands of gold and silver thread. She looked stunning, and I think she felt it inside.

As I set out to look for my dress for Rivka's bat mitzvah, I regressed a bit, trying to replicate my mother's bargain shopping, but with the same unsatisfying results. Finally, I realized that I needed help. Again, I took the day off from work, and brought both girls with me, back to Mme. Sylvia. This time, Mme. Sylvia chose a long gown, nothing like what I had initially imagined. I tried it on, and it was breathtaking. We all three said "Yes" at once. It was exactly right.

Why did I love that dress so much, with its long full skirt, crinoline underneath, satin flowers at the hip? How could this material venture represent such a high point in the emotional life of one dedicated to the spiritual aspects of living? The answer lay in a closet filled with memories.

As a child, I remember once choosing a party dress of red chiffon when shopping with my mother and two older sisters, only to be laughed at by the three of them. "Are you crazy?" they asked. "That's so ugly." But in my mind, the flounces of chiffon were more beautiful than anything I had ever seen.

Years later, buying a prom dress presented no problem. After all, I already had the dress I had worn as a bridesmaid to my sister's wedding. The apricot gown, although lovely, was picked out by my older sister, and matched those of the other half dozen young women chosen as bridesmaids. I wore it to the prom, but never got the pleasure of choosing my own prom dress.

I wish I had a story to tell of my mother and me happily shopping for my wedding gown. I would like to imagine us at the bridal salons, laughing and looking at one another knowingly. In retrospect, the reality seems rather predictable, perhaps even a bit boring. When my oldest sister was married, my father's dress business made a magnificent gown for her, exactly suited to her dignified simplicity. When my middle sister was married, this special gown was refitted for her. Of course, at the time, I considered it an honor for me to be able to wear this gown, when, a few years later, I too married. The gown was beautiful, but nothing like what I would have chosen. Deep inside me still lived the girl who loved the red chiffon flounce.

As I put on my dress for Rivka's bat mitzvah, I laughed at myself. This beautiful dress, crinoline and all, was my gift to myself as a grown woman coming of age. This was my coming out dress. I could be who I was. It was a result of the bat mitzvah dress that wasn't me, the red chiffon I never had, the prom dress that was used, and the wedding gown that was in my sister's image.

I felt I looked beautiful in this dress. But I think that the beauty wasn't really in the dress itself. It had to do with the glow that comes from being who you really are, from being able to finally express your inner self.

As usual, in my relationships with my children, I learn so much by being their mother. Certainly, the real importance of the girls' bat mitzvahs was far removed from choosing a dress. Each of them spent hours involved in Torah study, in addition to a year-long project of charitable activity, and a *tzedakah* program. The meaning of becoming obligated as Jewish adults, and of their development into maturity as Jewish women, far overshadowed the mundane activity of shopping for a dress.

What fascinated me, however, was that in the midst of the important priorities of the bat mitzvah celebration, the relatively small task of buying the dress took on a meaning of its own. For the girls, I think there was an increased sense of ownership of their maturing bodies, pleasure in their ability to make individuated choices, and increased pride in their growing selves. For me, there was a gift that my children often give to me, the possibility to heal and grow as they develop.

Nechama Liss-Levinson is a writer and psychologist in private practice in Great Neck, NY. □

Bat Mitzvah/Bar Mitzvah

EVERY FAMILY'S RITE OF PASSAGE

Some Feminist Psychological Wisdom from the Reigning Expert

LILITH here interviews Judy Davis, Ed.D., an expert in the field of the psychology of bat and bar mitzvah. Davis, a family therapist working and teaching at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, has explored the therapeutic potential of cultural ritual—specifically bat and bar mitzvah—since 1980, the year of her first son's bar mitzvah. Her scholarly publications include a chapter in Rituals in Families and Family Therapy, *edited by E. Imber Black, J. Roberts and R. Whiting (Norton, 1988), and a chapter on "The Bar Mitzvah Balabusta: Mother's Role in the Family's Rite of Passage," which will appear in* Women in Jewish Culture, *edited by M. Sachs (U. of Illinois Press), scheduled for 1995.*

Judy is currently at work on a book entirely about bat and bar mitzvah that speaks directly to parents about how we might make this particular lifecycle ritual most useful for our children, ourselves and our own parents.

Judy Davis with her son 14 years ago at his bar mitzvah–

LILITH: Judy, a good number of our readers have been, will be or are currently mothers of bat/bar mitzvah children. Can we understand our role from a feminist angle?

DAVIS: Given the cultural messages we've all grown up with, most of us take for granted that it is the mother who will be in charge of the planning details, who worries about the food, who gets "hysterical." My research counters the derogatory stereotypes by explicitly demonstrating how much the mother's efforts contribute positively to the family's rite of passage, and, as importantly, to her own growth as well.

A first child's bat/bar mitzvah is as much a developmental milestone for the mother as for the child. For the mother, the "ritual ordeal" comes not in the form of a public performance, but in the form of a private one—one that begins months before the first guest arrives. Mother is being tested (by herself as well as by others) in her capacity as "*balabusta*," her capacity—in the most sacred sense of the word—as preparer of food, provider of comfort, and protector of harmony. Without getting embroiled in the politics (both secular and religious) of gendered role expectations, one could understand this in feminist terms as a test of her capacity to protect connections.

With varying degrees of collaboration and/or assistance from her partner or other relatives, she is implicitly expected to manage the logistics of the event, an event that, in most families, is larger, more complicated, more costly, more emotionally laden than any in the nuclear family's previous experience. The bat/bar mitzvah is the first occasion in which the parents—as adults—present themselves publicly in relation to their religious tradition, their child's development, their family's evolution, and to everyone most important to them, all at the same time. In her capacity to organize this communal celebration of her child's coming of age, she herself, at some level, comes of age. A job well done results not only in a successful celebration, but also in a sense of enhanced self-confidence and elevated standing in the extended family and community.

LILITH: And we get so involved with the food.

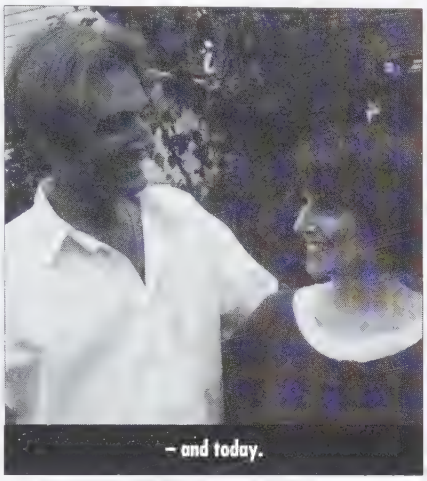
DAVIS: Food! Prior to the event, no matter what mothers were planning to provide, it was somehow not going to be enough. Afterwards, no matter how successful the meal(s) had been, every mother I interviewed in my research wished she had done yet one more thing (another kugel, another hospitality basket, another dessert). Obviously, this is not a concern about nutrition! Maury Sacks, anthropologist and folklorist, describes such details of preparation as containing an "embedded love message"—a message that implicitly binds mother, family, and community.

And of course the bat/bar mitzvah is, at its core, all about articulating bonds: it's a ritual that bonds the child to her family and its tradition while paradoxically enabling and celebrating separation and differentiation from it. Bat mitzvah also constructs a kind of emotional echo chamber: the bonding effect reverberates throughout the family system.

LILITH: So the mother in the bat mitzvah drama is doing something positive with all this worrying?

DAVIS: Look, to the extent that feminist psychology understands women's emotional development in terms of our capacity to connect, the developmental value of being a bat/bar mitzvah mother takes on additional meaning. Self development for women occurs not through a progressive series of separations but through the experience of evolving empathetic relationships. It is precisely our sense of continuity with the past that allows us to "differentiate."

The bat/bar mitzvah is a perfect emotional vehicle: for the child, it is an episode of individuation in the context of connection. That is, the child symbolically declares her separation from her parents—but through a ceremony that binds her to those parents fundamentally. For the mother, it is an inverse drama: it's all about connections, but in the context of differentiating. Everything she does, from deciding on the guest list to "getting" her child to write thank you notes, is about connections. But everything she's doing, she does as an adult, in charge, differentiated. For most first-time bat/bar mitzvah mothers, the last major life cycle ceremony of this magnitude and importance was our own weddings, and at that time—for most of us—we shared management of the event with our mothers. On this occasion though, grandma is a guest, and adult daughter is in charge. The event reflects her values, her standards, her accomplishments, her growth—*her* rite of passage.


– and today.

Anthropologist Mary Katherine Bateson notes women's extraordinary capacity to manage logistically and emotionally complex tasks. This ability—developed over millennia—needs to be named and valued. To the extent that it continues to be ignored and invisible, we contribute to women's continued sense of inferiority.

If we continue to overlook the systemic implications of the bat/bar mitzvah and continue to image the bat/bar mitzvah mother as stereotypically overbearing and controlling, we contribute to a view that not only devalues the mother's role in these rites but, indeed, supports a long psychological tradition of blaming her for most of what goes wrong.

LILITH: And what about Dad's role?

DAVIS: Father's role is definitely (at least in his son's rite of passage) much clearer, certainly more public, and dramatically less ridiculed. Whereas, traditionally, the mother has no public presence (publicly she is consigned to the role of spectator), the father is publicly central. Within the patriarchal tradition, Father is implicitly the representative elder whose ranks his son is joining. It is he who implicitly passes on the secrets of the tribe and it is he who publicly recites the "prayer of riddance," declaring that his son is now responsible for his own actions. Symbolically, Father embodies the sense of loss, the sense of the changing of the generational guards. "Just yesterday" it was he standing in the place where his son now stands, and "overnight" he has become his father. In all my research, Grandfather's shadow (living or dead) is palpable as father and son stand together on the *bimah*.

The child's bat or bar mitzvah is also a statement about the father's achievement in the secular world of work. No matter the size of the mother's salary, it is still generally assumed that the amplitude of the event is a result of the father's economic success.

LILITH: How is the bat mitzvah significant for a girl's development?

DAVIS: According to Carol Gilligan, middle-class girls, beginning around age 11 or 12, seem to move away from the confident, morally articulate pre-adolescents they had been and towards the more confused, apologetic, hesitant teenagers with which we are all familiar. She says that between the ages of 11 and 16, the young woman's "moment of resistance," her "clarity of vision," goes "underground." She becomes "disconnected" from herself (in a misguided attempt to stay connected to others), loses her "voice," her right to take care of herself if she perceives that caring for herself is in opposition to caring for others. What could be more timely than a bat mitzvah? At precisely the point in her development when her self confidence is in danger, the young woman is given this opportunity to take center stage, to push herself through the ordeal, to demonstrate her competence, and to speak—indeed to sing—out loud. It's a perfect counterweight—an implicit message that this young woman deserves to be the focus of attention, to be listened to, respected, admired and honored, and that she deserves to be held accountable to the same degree as her brother. What a gift.

LILITH: If you ask families a year later what was most significant to them about the event, what do you hear?

DAVIS: Most parents will talk (with as much amazement as pride) about the changes they witnessed in their child throughout the preparation and the performance.

In one family the parents had divorced bitterly. What was most important was that the event be "harmonious" and that the child—as the mother put it—"not be pulled apart" between his parents and their respective families. In retrospect, everyone in this family agreed that their commitment to this goal had paid off, that the adults' relationship with each other was significantly altered by virtue of this bar mitzvah, that lots of healing had occurred. The mother told me, "I felt good about myself for having created the space in which that warmth could have happened."

In this same family, there was also a dramatic reconnection between the mother and her aunts through her son's bar mitzvah. As a young adult she had rebelliously cut herself off from them. So this event was a repairing of extended family. I think that this latter reconnection will ultimately be what is most significant for the mother.

LILITH: When we think about a bat mitzvah, we mean a one-day event. But that's not what you have in mind.

DAVIS: Right. I'm talking about a protracted private process

that takes place all through the year. It's one of those "hinges of time." A time when a family is most open to change. As the family prepares for a child's bat mitzvah, it enters a kind of "sacred space." It begins to think of itself as special and to be treated by others as special: "The Bat Mitzvah Family." In this "space" the process of dealing with logistical details can be therapeutic. Emotional issues in the family "heat up," come to the surface and get dealt with. Should the extended families of a divorced couple be housed in the same hotel? Where should an ex-husband's new wife and baby sit in the synagogue? How much of the haftorah will a child be expected to learn? How the family deals with these details can make a difference. They are opportunities for family members to think in new and different ways about themselves. The months of preparation for the ritual are part of the ritual process itself; the very changes the ceremony is meant to celebrate are enabled by the process of preparation.

LILITH: Judy, what about the purpose of ritual?

DAVIS: What's magical about ritual is that it's a phenomenon that incorporates both change and no change simultaneously. Throughout the ages, rituals developed to mark change from one clearly defined status to another, and they functioned to maintain the community, to maintain the status quo. In order to stay healthy over the lifecycle, a family must continually readjust the balance between autonomy and cohesion, between change and continuity. Rituals provide us with this opportunity. Ritual is the original form of therapy. The end product of both is the same: change in the context of stability.

In the case of bat/bar mitzvah, I watch for how the family manages the emotional tasks of moving from being a family with a child to being a family with an adolescent, someone "getting ready" to be an adult. By emotional tasks I mean allowing the child increased autonomy, grieving for the loss which that autonomy implies, allowing for the evolution of the parents' relationship not only with each other, but with their own parents too. It's a rite of passage for all.

The more I study families, the more I come to see the bat or bar mitzvah as a natural coping mechanism for families facing the normal crisis of adolescent transition. Just as the child, beginning her teen-age years with this affirming public event, gains strength for the struggles ahead, so does the whole family. Through their private performance (of maturity and competence), the parents discover and reinforce new strengths. Through the public ritual, in which they are literally surrounded by the good will and support of family and friends, they discover and reinforce resources both in themselves and in their extended systems. One bat mitzvah mother I talked to described the experience as being "love-bombed." Every time she took a peek at the sea of friends and family seated behind her in the synagogue, she felt overwhelmed. "They were smiling at me, nodding at me, winking, crying. It filled me with love."

LILITH: You talk about the bat/bar mitzvah's "magical" changes, but it seems that after the bat/bar mitzvah weekend, the family returns to normal (except that the kid is richer and the parents poorer).

DAVIS: By definition, ritual works magically, but it doesn't work magic. After the bat/bar mitzvah, the family is still dealing with the same issues, but it has also now officially "Passed the Test." It has proclaimed that the family and the child are changing, and that the changes are good. No matter how immature the child acts or is treated after the event, no one can deny the public demonstration of her growing maturity. No matter how disconnected the family is from the larger Jewish community, no one can deny their having participated in its cultural and religious rituals.

LILITH: What about the child who has a learning disability or some other handicap that would prevent her from performing like the prototypical "rabbi's kid"?

DAVIS: What I tell all kids—with a handicap or not—is that, to some extent, this ritual has to be an ordeal or it won't work; it won't feel like an accomplishment. And that's the key, I think. Preparation for the performance has to push the child beyond where she has previously been, so that when it's over she feels proud of herself.

LILITH: How come there's been so little written about the psychology and sociology of bat/bar mitzvah?

DAVIS: Until a few years ago most sociologists dismissed the occasion as a nostalgic, if not regressive, remnant of an earlier age, Novelists mocked it; anthropologists ignored it altogether. Even Jewish educators have been conflicted about its value. Psychoanalysts explained the phenomenon simply as Oedipal drama (the son usurping his father's place in relation to mother). Even the proverbial fountain pen, the quintessential bar mitzvah gift, was sexualized—it became the immigrant family's version of the phallic sword.

But things are changing. Now there's considerable bat/bar mitzvah material. We parents are seeking new ways to understand what we're doing and what we are asking our children to do, ways that do not reject, but complement, the traditional explanations to which we feel, perhaps, less connected. Jewish professionals, rocked by intermarriage demographics, are looking seriously for new ways to describe Jewish rituals that can engage families.

LILITH: You've told us how it works for the family as a whole, but can you tell us how the bat/bar mitzvah works developmentally for the child?

DAVIS: The child, the central character, gets to portray her unique version of her evolution, and the parents and grandparents, the other members of the cast, get to enact their versions of support. The invited family and friends, who have gathered as audience, witness the enacted changes. In a highly charged and dramatic way, the bat/bar mitzvah is itself the family's story of this child's growing up. □

MORE BAT MITZVAH INFO. . .

TO DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH

ORTHODOX WOMEN'S SERVICES Ronnie Becher (718) 884-1935; for sample copy of Women's Tefilla Network Newsletter: Esther Farber (718) 796-1368.

WOMEN'S CIRCLES Rochel Trugman, 675 South Jersey, Denver, CO 80224 (303) 355-6970.

TZEDAKAH/MITZVAH PROJECTS Ziv Foundation, Naomi Eisenberger (201)763-9396, or Rabbi Howard Siegel (612) 927-7309/925-4673, or Danny Siegel, Ziv Tzedakah Foundation, 263 Congressional Lane #708, Rockville, MD 20852.

ECOLOGY IN ISRAEL Have your rite at Neot Kedumim Biblical Landscape Reserve. The child's Torah portion is linked to a biblica-agricultural setting; seasonal activities such as harvesting wheat, grinding grain, baking pita, shearing sheep, spinning wool, making olive oil or treading the "fruit of the vine." Information: Paul and Lillian Steinfeld, American Friends of Neot Kedumim, Halcott Center, NY 12430, (914) 254-5031; in Israel, Judy Labensohn, Bat/Bar Mitzvah Coordinator, Neot Kedumim, Box 1007, Lod, Israel. Phone: 011-972-8-233-840, FAX: 011-972-8-245-881.

TALLIT-MAKING Elizabeth Wolf, 7408 Spyglass Way, Raleigh NC 27615, (919) 790-8857.

NATIONAL HAVURAH COMMITTEE Committed to an egalitarian, religious, communal immersion in Jewish thought and social action. For information on havurot in your area: 7318 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19119, (215) 248-9760.

JEWISH WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER Maintains good reference materials on bat mitzvah; National Council of Jewish Women, 9 E. 69th St., New York, NY 10021, (212) 535-5900.

STORYTELLER To help young women discover the story of their names and explore their families' stories; Penninah Schram, 525 West End Ave., NY, NY 10024, (914) 962-9387.

TWINNING PROGRAM For $180, be twinned with an Israeli-Ethiopian student, receive a handwoven Ethiopian *tallit* or challah cover, and more Details from Miriam Weissman,Twinning Coordinator, North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry, 165 E. 56th St., New York, NY 10022, (212)752-6340, FAX (212)980-529.

FOR HELP IN FINDING BAT MITZVAH TUTORS

WOMEN CANTORS NETWORK Cantor Doris Cohen, 87-14 Barrington St., Jamaica Estates, NY 11432, (718) 291-3089.

WOMEN RABBIS NETWORK An organization Reform female rabbis and rabbinic students. c/o Brooklyn Heights Synagogue, 117 Remsen St., Brooklyn, NY 11201; Rabbi Sue Wasserman, (718)522-2070.

PRIVATE BAT/BAR MITZVAH CEREMONIES. A wife-and-husband team run a business making arrangements for the celebration in your home or catering place—lessons, invitations, etc. Pamela and Jay Dreznick, 69G Overlook Way, Manalapan, NJ 07726; (718)931-265, (908)536-4125.

TO FIND A CONGREGATION NEAR YOU

UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM. 155 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010, (212) 533-7800.

SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA. (Orthodox), 327 Lexington Avenue, NY, NY, 10457, (212) 686-8670.

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS. (Reform), 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York, 10021, (212) 249-0100.

FEDERATION OF RECONSTRUCTIONIST CONGREGATIONS AND HAVUROT, 165 East 56th Street, NY, NY, (212) 752-5411.

ALEPH ALLIANCE FOR JEWISH RENEWAL. (Formerly P'nai Or Religious Fellowship). Judaism through prayer, meditation, tradition and mysticism, (215) 242-4074.

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Torah Aura Productions, 1994-1995 Core Curriculum Guide, "Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the Lens Through Which a Jewish Life is Focused" Joel Grishaver, 4423 Fruitland Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90058, 1-800-Be-Torah) □

A Lesson In L

Our Synagogue's service, on Rosh Hashanah eve, begins with a spiritual exercise. Each congregant brings to the shul an object, smaller than a breadbox, that represents what was best about his or her last year. These objects—everything from hiking boots to postcards to frayed lawyers' time sheets—sit warmly and mysteriously on a *bimah*, or altar, in the middle of the sanctuary, alongside hundreds of High Holiday candles. At a certain point in the *davening*, those who want to are invited to talk contemplatively about what they brought.

I kind of frame this exercise (I'm the rabbi) with an axiom from the photographer Cartier-Bresson. He used to say that "it takes a lot of milk to make a little cream." He would shoot rolls and rolls of film, and then throw away everything but one photograph. This, unfortunately, is not unlike our lives. Soon enough we throw away (because we forget) all the "milk"—but it's a good religious habit to identify, and in that way never lose, our "cream."

In any case, this year, a few weeks before Rosh Hashanah, I overheard my children, Lincoln, age 10, and Anna, 5, talking about Annie's "cream":

LINCOLN: What are you putting on the *bimah*, Annie? You have to bring what was best about last year.
ANNIE: I'm bringing what was worst.
L: You can't do that.
A: I'm bringing the worst.
L: Nobody brings the worst.
A: But Sneaky the Duck died.
L: (pause) Oh, not Sneaky the Duck! You can't put a dead duck on a *bimah*.
A: I'm drawing a picture of him, and the funeral.
L: (pause) Annie, didn't anything good happen to you this year?
A: Not big, like Sneaky.
L: (pause) Well, maybe something good came from Sneaky dying. . . like Mommy says about bad things.
A: Lincoln, Sneaky died! How could something good come from that?
L: Well, how about before Sneaky died? Maybe the best thing from last year was that you had a pet duck before he died.
A: And then he died, Lincoln.

At Sneaky's funeral, obviously a watershed event, Lincoln and Anna cried with an intensity that was heartbreaking. Chanting at the top of their little lungs (I told them that singing helps get the pain out, which I believe), they sobbed, keened, and belted out lyrics.

Later that night Anna said, "You know, Mommy, the vet said Sneaky would live, but he died. How do I know the doctors aren't lying about you?" And then, casually, "I wish everyone died from just one thing, like heart cancer. That way people wouldn't have to worry about everything — like your lupus."

A month or so later, Annie came to my bedroom with a pencil and paper, and asked if I'd take dictation. She wanted to write a note to her teacher's aide, she said, whose father had just died. Mrs. Livingston would miss school all week, sitting *shiva*. Here is Anna's note:

Dear Mrs. Livingston:

I know it's hard when someone you love dies. This happened to our duck, and I was very sad. I really miss you because you are a great teacher. I think after time passes you get better about it, and you don't think about it so much.

I know if something's very old and it dies, you still want it to get older and older so it doesn't have to die that day. But when it dies, you'll still wish that you want it to be older. I'm kind of copying off how I feel about Sneaky the Duck.

I know you loved your father very much, but it has to happen some time. I know it's very upsetting, but it does always have to happen, and everyone knows that you're upset that your father died.

Love,
Anna Miriam

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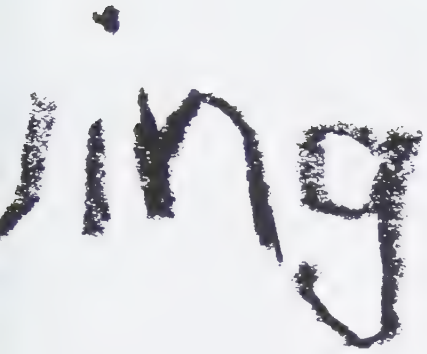
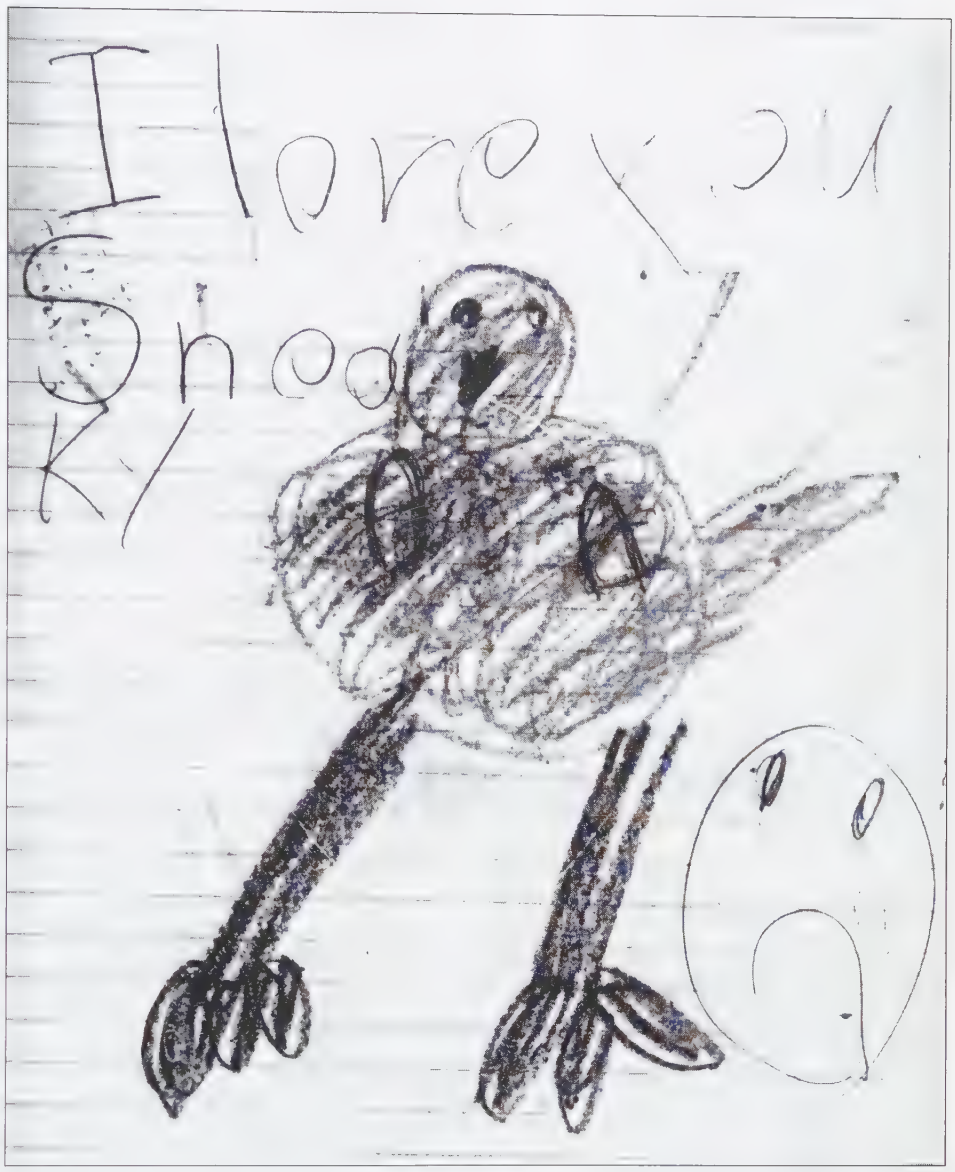
BY SUSAN SCHNUR



"We did learn good things this year: like how ashamed you feel when you go to the mall in a wheelchair."



When the High Holidays finally arrived, Anna, true to her word as always, placed a drawing of Sneaky the Duck on the *bimah*. On one side is Sneaky, all crayony and yellow, and Anna crying. On the other is the duck's grave, brown with four bright flowers, and a row of printed grave markers. "I love you Sneaky," reads one. "I wish you were here." "I will remember you always." "I'm very upset and hope that you love us too."

When it was her turn to talk, she said, "Before, when one of our farm animals died, Lincoln always cried, but I never understood. I always felt kind of. . . nothing. But when Sneaky died," she continued, "I understood about it. So this is my best thing of the year," she summed up abruptly, hunkering back down on the rug.

When it was my turn to talk, I lifted up my object: Anna's letter to Mrs. Livingston. I read it out loud, emphasizing the best line—"I'm kind of copying off how I feel about Sneaky the Duck."

As my congregants knew, I had been ill all year, bed-bound for months. What they didn't know fully was how challenging each day was for my family. "This last year," I said, "I felt like a failure a lot—as a professional, as a wife, and, most painfully, as a mother. It's anguish to feel that your children are taking better care of you than you can take care of them.

"Anna's letter," I said, "was my first sign that things would be all right. That my children's anxiety and pain could be transformed into compassion."

We did learn good things this year: like how ashamed you feel when you go to the mall in a wheelchair, and how many people have struggles that are invisible outside the walls of their house, and that it's not just other people who get sick, but regular people get sick, too, like your mother.

As I tucked Anna into her bottom bunkbed that night, I said, "So tell me, Ms. Anna Miriam, when did you decide that Sneaky's death was good?"

"Oh, I don't know," she said.

"When did you decide your lupus was good?" offered Lincoln from above. "It's the same thing, Mommy."

And then we lay in the dark a long time, considering a whole new year. □

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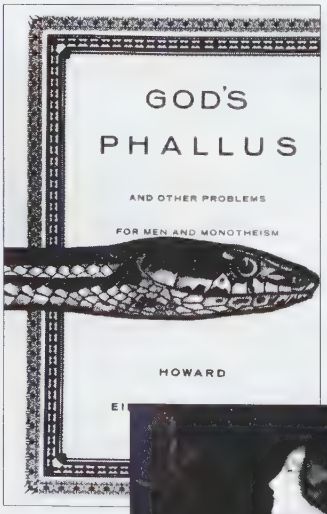

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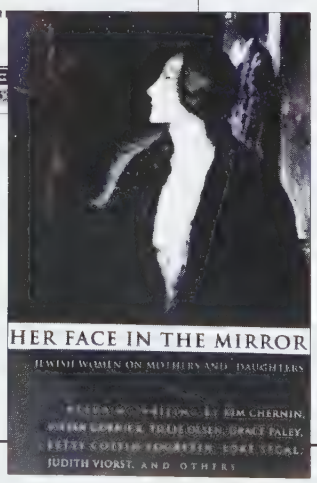

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BEACON

(Continued from page 40)

We had a whole agenda of "Judy games" anned, but we only got through the first o. For introductions, we asked the women share something about themselves which ade them unique among Jewish Judys & diths. Perhaps not unexpectedly, our ests did not stick to answering the ques-on. Instead, many digressed in various rections, including talking about how they lt about their names, what it was like to ow up with the name "Judy" or "Judith," ho they were named for, and mini-versions life histories.

Despite moments of chaos, the group ve each woman good attention, and there as a lot of animated exchange, laughter, aybe even a few tears. The Judys & Judiths the room felt safe—and consequently ared some important and undisguised ings about themselves. The introductions emed to take forev-, but it was neat to gin to get to know e another.

Our second activi- was a mixer, "Find Judy Who. . . ." ach woman was ven a paper with the ords "Find a Judy ho. . ." at the top, d then a long list. Find a Judy who is left-anded, has been to Israel more than five mes, has eaten ham, had a bat mitzvah, has ved on a farm, knows a Jewish baseball ayer, is a parent, etc.

The women at the party had about 15 inutes to mill around and find others who each category. Then we got the group ck together and went through each item, king the women to raise their hands if an em pertained to them.

I had thought this part would be over in ve minutes, but instead just about every em generated further discussion and some-mes further questions. The group wanted to ow who had been raised working-class, ho had been raised in the South, and so on. e women were very curious about each her. I don't think we've had many opportu-ties to come together as Jewish women and d out about each other's lives.

Before we knew it, two hours had passed d we were rapidly approaching the end of r party. As I started to suggest that we go to the other room for refreshments, there as a flurry of side discussion. Suddenly three women volunteered to plan another Jewish Judys & Judiths party in February. There was even talk of a logo and a JJ&J trip to Israel! Judith Wild and I were stunned. Going into this we thought perhaps the women would want us to plan another get-together in a year or two. We were not prepared for the level of enthusiasm.

We went into the dining room for the last few minutes of the party. We had made a cake which read, "Judy & Judith, You're Terrific!" We lit one candle for each woman present, and sang "Happy Birthday" to ourselves. Total silliness, but everyone seemed to be having a good time anyway!

After the party was over and some of us were cleaning up, one woman said she thought our guests had gone away feeling very good and empowered. Her words took me by surprise. Empowered? By a party? On further reflection, and after hearing post-party comments from others, I think she was right.

The success of the party remains a delightful mystery to me. Maybe it is an indication of Jewish women's longing for each other. Or perhaps it's important for us to take pride in something as simple as our names.

In many ways, this party was my most successful organizing effort of the last several years. Organizing with lightness and playfulness certainly seems to have some advantages over head-on organizing around distress and oppression. Maybe the fast-track to global well-being is, after all, simply to organize the whole world according to first names! The goal of community building is to feel connected, not separate—how nice it was (for a change) to create a community for ourselves based on joy, and not on neediness and plummeting hopes.

Meanwhile, the Jewish Judys & Judiths of Portland are moving forward! We'll let you know what happens next. □

If you need some help in putting together your own "Jewish Judys & Judiths" party, contact Judy Brodkey, 1604 S. E. 41st Street, Portland, OR, 97214 (503-234-1012). She has no experience organizing Ellens, Miriams, Sharons, Saras, Robins, Deborahs, Marcias or Ruths, but maybe she'll indulge you.

FIND A JUDY WHO is Coordinator of the Oregon Breast and Cervical Cancer Coalition, and is an organizational development consultant; who teaches people how to organize on issues of racism, sexism and anti-Semitism; and who, in her spare time, is learning the trapeze and unicycle (and also loves chocolate and baseball.)

[This article is adapted from *Present Time*, April'94, a magazine of Re-evaluation Counseling.]

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TSENA RENA

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GIVING AND GETTING

Help provide emergency medical care and shelter to Rwandan refugees. A coalition of 35 Jewish organizations, working together with humanitiarian Abie Nathan, is seeking financial support for this effort from the American Jewish community. Tax deductible contributions to EFICRP—Rwanda Relief may be sent to *Education Fund for Israeli Civil Rights and Peace—Rwanda Relief, 15 E. 26 St., #919, New York, NY 10010. (212) 447-6652.*

Help develop new high-tech-industries in Israel. Contribute seed money to nurture the brain power and human resources of fledgling Israeli businesses now being "incubated" by the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Four years ago Yvonne Liebel created a nonprofit organization that hopes to assist 50 new Israeli projects each year. Tax deductible contributions to *Alliance Foundation, 54 Danbury Rd., Ridgefield, CT 06877. (800) 565-3223.*

The Amy Adina Schulman Memorial Fund, established to honor the life of a vibrant young woman, gives small awards to young adults who work or study for a minimum of three months contributing to some aspect of Israeli life which involves building a just and egalitarian society or enhancing understanding among peoples in the Middle East; or working in areas such as feminist concerns, civil rights , peace or environmental activities, in the U.S. or Canada. Applicant must commit to educate peers and others upon return to her or his home or school community. Contributions or applications to *Amy Adina Schulman Memorial Fund, 124 Snowden Lane, Princeton, NJ 08540.*

1995 Hillel Guide to Financial Support for Jewish College Students contains advice and information on scholarships, loans, fellowships, internships, and contests. 72 pages. $12, plus $2 postage book rate, or $4 first class; bulk discounts: *Hillel/FACETS, 1600 Campus Road, Box F-10, Los Angeles, CA 90041.* Send information about additional resources for future updates to author *Caty Konigsberg at Occidental College Hillel (213) 259-2959; or fax (213) 341-4959.*

SEND YOUR STUFF

A revision of our previous call to artists: Due to internal staff changes at UJA Federation-New York, the exhibition honoring LILITH Magazine's 18th anniversary "Jewish Visions by Women Artists" will be postponed till early winter 1994-5. It will include works by artists in the New York metropolitan region only (New York City, Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk counties) however, artists outside this area are invited to inquire about submitting works for future exhibits. *Robin Dennenberg, Building Art Committee, UJA Federation, 130 E. 59th St., New York, NY 10022.*

Creating New Jewish Life Cycle Rituals? A fifth year rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion is searching for creative ceremonies and rit Unless otherwise requested resources will be filed in th Rabbinic Resource Center HUC-JIR campus. Send photocopies to *Stephanie W 3101 Clifton Ave., Cincinn OH 45220. (510) 569-0712*

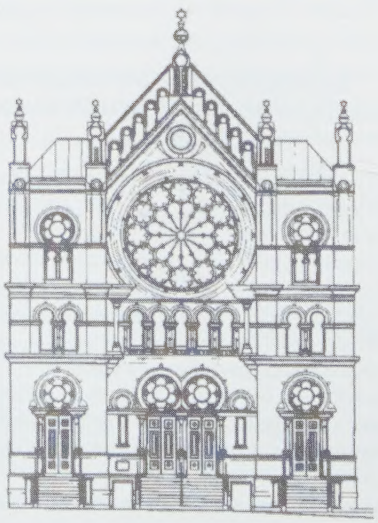
Original stories and midrashim based on personalities and episodes i Torah are sought for an anthology for adults and ol children. 400-1500 words. *Rabbi David A. Katz, 315 Forest Ave., Staten Island, 10301. (718) 727-2231*, or *Lovenheim, 52 San Gabriel Rochester, NY 14610. (716) 381-6830, daytime.*

Faith: from love not hate, TV program, will explore realities, spiritual searches steadfastness of Jewish life Send a brief written statem about the catalyst for your religious or cultural activiti including a phone number possible follow-up. *Bunie Veeder or Elly Schull Meek The New York Board of Ra 10 E. 73 St., New York, NY 10021-4194. (212) 772-39 esmeeks @aol. com.*

PRESERVE & CONSERVE

Endangered historic Jewish sites across the United States are being identified and local volunteers are needed to collect information about the architecture, history, current use, and condition of the sites. *Jewish Heritage Council, World Monuments Fund, 174 E. 80 St., New York, NY 10021.*

The Vilna Center for Jewish Heritage in Boston is working to claim the Vilna Shul in that city as a historic landmark. Boston is the only major city in the U.S. without a Jewish museum. To get involved in lobbying for this cause, contact *Barbara Hunt, Campaign Coordinator, One Financial Center, 40 Fl., Boston , MA 02111.*



A new public-interest environmental library is seeking donations of literatur on environmental issues of the 80's and 90's, including scientific texts and materials from related disciplines. *Israe Union for Environmental Defense, 317 Hayarkon St., Tel Aviv 63504, Israel.*

Rendering of the Eldridge Street Synagogue, on Manhattan's Lower Ea Side, being restored by the Eldridge Street Project, 12 Eldridge St., New York, NY 10002.

TEACHING & LEARNING

Breaking the Silence: Jewish Feminists Tell Their Stories, explores the lives and stories of E.M. Broner, Marcia Freedman, Susan Griffin, Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, Deena Metzger, Judith Plaskow and Savina Teubal, along with music, documentary, and excerpts from ATJT plays Snake Talk: Urgent Messages from the Mother, and Berlin Jerusalem and the Moon. One in a series of four tapes available from programs created for broadcast on public radio. $12.50. *A Traveling Jewish Theatre, P.O. Box 421985, San Francisco, CA 94142-1985.*

CRAIG BERMAN

Rachel Louis(left) and Claire Mix as cousins Ruth and Naomi

How a Jewish family and community deal with "coming out" as gay or lesbian is the subject of a video "You Shall Be a Blessing" an outgrowth of Kavod, a gay-sensitive counseling and education program of the Jewish Family Service. Currently in pre-production, funds are needed for completion. Contact producer, *Claire Mix, 3777 Hayden Dr., San Jose, CA 95117. (408)554-6083, or Karen Belford, Kavod Director, Jewish Family Service of Santa Clara, 14855 Oka Road, #3, Los Gatos, CA 95030. (408) 399-2202.*

Learn Torah with scholars Savina Teubal, Carol Meyers, Marcia Falk, Tikvah Frymer-Kensky, Rachel Adler, Rachel Cowan, Debbie Weissman, Jo Milgrom, Blu Greenberg, Deborah Lipstadt, Amy Eilberg, Elyse Goldstein, Tamar Frankiel and others (male and female) beginning September 1994. A two-page commentary will be faxed weekly to subscribers, with a third page of the best fax or e-mail responses; edited by Joel Grishaver and Stuart Kelman. $185/year, Canada $220.*Torah Aura Productions, 4423 Fruitland Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90058. 800-BE-TORAH.*

A class in contemporary Israeli literature for Israelis and others fluent in Hebrew, taught by Zvia Ginor, meets Tuesday evenings, biweekly at the Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway, NYC. The spring curriculum will include new works by female authors Batya Gur, Yehudit Hendel and Orly Kastel-Blum. Contact *Margalit. (212) 678-8993.*

Hebrew Writers, a directory of modern and contemporary Hebrew authors of fiction, poetry, and drama--among them 30 women--lists their published works and those available in translation. 140 pages. $10. *Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature, P. O. Box 10051, 52001 Ramat Gan, Israel. (03) 579-6830, fax (03) 579-6832.* Also available *Hebrew Women Writers 1994,* 30 pages with excerpts from 9 authors.

GADI DAGON

Batya Gur, author of *The Literary Murder* (Harper Collins)

OSNATH KRASNANSKI

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nplicating Categories: men, Gender, and erence is the theme of the Berkshire Conference on History of Women to be June 7-9, 1996 at UNC in pel Hill, NC. Proposals ld be submitted in triplicate ebruary 1, 1995, on U.S. Canadian topics to: *Evelyn oks Higginbotham, Afro-rican Studies Dept., vard University, 1430 sachusetts Ave., bridge, MA 02138*; on cs other than North erican women to *Merry sner-Hanks, Center for nen's Studies, University of consin, P.O. Box 413, vaukee, WI 53201.*

TRAVEL . . . WITH A DIFFERENCE

Meet Israeli women business owners, such as the owner of the largest dried flower company in the world, the manager of a meat packing plant, and a prize winning uniform designer and manufacturer, on a UJA Federation business and professional women's mission to Israel, "Energizing Links in Israel and New York." The next mission is planned for May 1995. Contact *Roberta Zuckerman, Project Eliany, UJA-Federation, 130 E. 59th St., New York, NY 10022. (212) 836-1117.*

Gay Israel Discovery Tours offers a series of expeditions led by experienced gay and lesbian guides, exploring the historical roots of Judaism, as well as those of the gay and lesbian heritage. Participants will meet with Israeli gays and lesbians, attend a party at the Gay and Lesbian Center in Tel Aviv, and attend a memorial service at Yad Vashem for homosexual victims of Nazi persecution during the Holocaust. Scheduled for November 19-29, and December 29-January 8. Contact *Ron Dayan, ITP Travel, 11 E. 26 St., New York, NY 10010. (212) 749-7139.*

Israel, a Woman's View, a new program of the American Jewish Congress, combines a traditional tour with meetings with female members of the Knesset, a visit to a Jerusalem shelter for abused women, a seminar on the role of women in Jewish tradition, as well as a bat mitzvah-affirmation ceremony atop Masada. Departures October 9, and November 6. Details in the new 96-page catalog from *American Jewish Congress, 15 E. 84th St., New York, NY 10028. (212)879-4588.*

-compiled by Naomi Danis

Clockwise from the upper left: Judy, Judy, Judy, Judy, whoops, Judy, whoops, Judy, Judy, Judy, Judy. And (missing from Elijah's chair because she's photographing her homonyms): Judy.

JEWISH JUDYS & JUDITHS

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

by Judy Brodkey

I recently discovered a new approach to organizing Jewish women.

Last September my friend Judith Wild and I began planning a Jewish Judys & Judiths party for early November. The idea started out as a joke, but I decided we should make it happen. I tend to take life pretty seriously (I organize on issues of injustice—racism, sexism, anti-Semitism—in both my professional and avocational lives). I thought this party would lighten me up. I was also deliberately looking for ways to break through my isolation—I had lived in Portland, Oregon for two years, but it still felt like a very new city to me.

One of the biggest challenges of planning the party was to track down Jewish women named Judy & Judith in Portland. We sent invitations to all the synagogues and Jewish women's organizations in the area. We also posted notices in high visibility spots like the Jewish Community Center. Mostly we relied on word of mouth to identify our constituency.

NON-JUDYS WERE DISTRESSED. "CAN'T WE COME TO YOUR PARTY, TOO?"

I loved telling people about the party. Whenever I mentioned it, people invariably got excited. Sometimes non-Judys were distressed that they weren't invited ("Can't I come too?"), or they reprimanded me ("Why are you doing something exclusive?").

A fun dividend of organizing the party was spending several hours in the library researching the names "Judy" & "Judith." Growing up (in Sioux City, Iowa), I had never felt very proud of my name, so it was a big contradiction to find symphonies, poems, sculptures, a radio show, a television show, a movie, and more than 60 books by or about women with my name. Judith Wild and I also identified almost 25 famous Judys & Judiths (Judy Woodruff, Judith Jamison, Judy Carne, Judy Holliday, Judy Blume, etc.), some of them even Jewish!

After two months of concentrated organizing, the day of the party finally arrived. To create ambiance, I put out Judy paraphernalia: books, postcards, even a sign advertising a performance of the rock band "Judybats." I also put out our fledgling Judy music collection: albums by Judy Collins and Judy Garland; the Judith Triumphant symphony by Vivaldi, and sheet music for some obscure Judy songs such as "Judy Drownded," a West Indies folk tale.

Sixteen Jewish Judys & Judiths showed up for the party. We've since identified a total of 30 women! From the time the women came through the front door, it was obvious they were very pleased to be coming together. They were talking a lot—laughing and chattering— even before we started the organized portion of our party.

(Continued on page 37)